

Je ne regrette rien' — Mitterrand

Japan's newest princess named Kako

1995: A year of homage to Oscar Wilde

Iran air chief, aides killed in crash

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran's air force chief, his deputy and four other senior officers were among 12 people killed when their plane crashed in central Iran, officials said Friday. General Mansour Sattari, his deputy Gen. Mostafa Ardestani, and four other officers were killed along with six crewmen when their plane crashed late Thursday trying to return to Isfahan airport following "technical difficulties," they said. The plane had taken off for the capital Tehran, they added. Gen. Mansour Sattari, who was 46 and had trained in both Iran and the United States, was considered the architect of the reconstruction and modernisation of the air force which was badly damaged in the 1980-1988 war with Iraq.

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Sharif Zeid in consultations, expected to finalise cabinet soon

Majali government remains as caretaker after resigning New cabinet expected to have wider parliamentary base

By Ghadeer Taher and Ayman Al Safadi

AMMAN — Prime Minister-designate Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker continued consultations late Friday evening over the formation of his new government which is expected to be announced either Saturday or Sunday.

The government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali formally submitted its resignation on Thursday to His Majesty King Hussein, who asked the cabinet to remain in office in a caretaker capacity until a new executive authority is formed.

Although it was not officially announced, the King also asked Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to form the new government, sources said.

Sharif Zeid consulted over the past two days with parliamentary blocs, technocrats, and independent politicians to form his cabinet which is expected to include 10-15 lawmakers.

Sources close to Sharif Zeid said he would consult with all the blocs in the Lower House of Parliament before he announces his government. Many parliamentarians agreed and said it was characteristic of Sharif Zeid's politics to consult with the legislature and maintain a good working relationship

with it. The 17-member Islamic Action Front (IAF), the most influential grouping in the 80-seat house, is not expected to join the new government as a bloc. IAF sources, however, expect Sharif Zeid to consult with the group over the composition of the new cabinet and they expect the new prime minister to set up strong ties with all political groups.

But IAF spokesman Hamzeh Mansour told the Jordan Times Friday afternoon that his bloc had not been approached by the prime minister-designate. President of the 18-member National Action Front Abdul Baqi Jammo said Sharif Zeid had contacted him and a meeting was expected to take place either late yesterday or today.

Sheikh Jammo said his bloc would take a unified decision on whether to join the government, saying it was willing to join the government provided that its participation "is an active and real one."

Complete support for Sharif Zeid came from the spokesman of the 10-member National Democratic Coalition, Hammad Abu Jamous, who said his bloc was looking forward to establishing a "productive relationship" with the new government. Mr. Abu Jamous said the



Abdul Salam Majali



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

hloc was still awaiting consultations with the prime minister-designate.

Although Sharif Zeid has not completed consultations with all parliamentary blocs, representatives of most of the blocs were confident that the new government would enjoy a strong parliamentary base when it seeks the House's vote of confidence.

"Sharif Zeid is a democratic man who respects the House and its institutions," said independent deputy Awad Khleifat, who could be among a 17-member group that some centrist deputies are trying to form. Sharif Zeid's approach,

expected to be on Sharif Zeid's team.

His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly said that the era of peace will require a new spirit to face challenges posed by signing of the Jordan-Israel peace deal.

In addition to the 10-15 deputies who are expected to be on Sharif Zeid's team, five to seven ministers from the outgoing government are expected to join the new cabinet.

The deputies expected to be in the government are: Abdul Hadi Al Majali, Abdul Karim Kabariti, Ali Abal Ragheb, Saleh Irshaidat (minister of water and irrigation in the outgoing cabinet), Sameer Habash-oeb, Awad Khleifat, Aref Bataineh (minister of health), Rateb Al Soud (minister of higher education), Sameer Kawa (minister of transport), Muner Souber, Abdul Karim Al Dughmi, Jamal Sarairoh and Tawfiq Kreishan (minister of rural and municipal affairs and the environment).

Ministers in Dr. Majali's government who are expected to join the new cabinet in addition to the deputies-ministers mentioned above are: Reema Khalaf, Adel Al Quda and Abdul Razzaq Ensour.

(Continued on page 7)



Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu, accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, inspects a guard of honour at Amman airport upon his arrival Friday on a several-day visit to Jordan (photo by Yusef Allan)

Majali pays tribute to Greek, EU support for peace treaty

Papandreu begins visit praising Jordanian leadership and policy

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said Friday that the historic friendship between Jordan and Greece, deepened and strengthened by His Majesty King Hussein and the president of Greece, had enriched relations and bolstered the understanding between the people of the two countries.

Speaking at a dinner he hosted in honour of visiting Greek Premier Andreas Papandreu, Dr. Majali highlighted the Greek and European stand towards the peace treaty signed between Jordan and Israel and said that Jordan had made big sacrifices and endured heavy burdens but successfully managed to confront all the challenges facing the region.

Dr. Majali, welcoming Mr. Papandreu, said Jordan always looks to the "support of our friends in Greece and in the European Union and seeks joint endeavours to boost our mutual relations."

Mr. Papandreu expressed his happiness for being in Jordan and congratulated Dr. Majali for the signing of the

peace treaty with Israel. He said Athens was keen to participate in solving two basic problems: to ensure security for all the parties in the Middle East and to guarantee economic development to achieve tangible results for the people of the region.

The Greek premier said Athens would continue to exert efforts to have all parties respect all the articles agreed upon in their peace agreement.

The dinner was attended by Premier-designate Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament and other senior officials.

Mr. Papandreu arrived here from Syria after a three-day visit.

Mr. Papandreu was received upon arrival here by Dr. Majali and senior officials.

In an arrival statement, Mr. Papandreu said: "the main purpose of his visit was to further the relationship between Jordan and Greece. 'Always we have been friends in history, but we

have not been active enough in the last four years especially in developing this relationship," he said.

Mr. Papandreu expressed admiration of His Majesty King Hussein's leadership and described him as a man who writes history.

"We have admiration for your country and its very sage leadership. His Majesty, who in difficult times had made difficult choices and turned out to correct. He is a man who writes history," he said.

The topics of discussion during his visit, Mr. Papandreu said, will include economic issues in addition to cultural exchanges.

Mr. Papandreu will meet with King Hussein to discuss bilateral relations and issues of common concern. He will also hold talks with Dr. Majali and senior Jordanian officials.

Crown Prince begins private visit to U.K.

Trip unrelated to cabinet change

By Jennifer Hawarneh Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's departure to London Thursday was neither a political move nor a personal message related to the impending change in the government, a source close to the Crown Prince said Friday.

The source dismissed comments by some observers that the Crown Prince's decision to travel was a demonstration of his preference not to participate in the deliberations in selecting the next Cabinet.

Prime Minister-designate Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, who was asked to form a new government.

Many observers believe that Prince Hassan was instrumental in forming the last Council of Ministers, particularly in the addition of parliamentarians, among them, Thouran Hindawi, to the cabinet. Mr. Hindawi resigned his cabinet seat on Dec.

5, 1994 over differences in policies in the post-peace era, but other members of parliament have continued to serve in the cabinet until this day.

According to the source, the reshuffle of Dr. Majali's cabinet last June was participated in by the Crown Prince because, at the time, the situation was "unique." The country was moving swiftly towards the signing of a peace treaty with Israel, and the Crown Prince had been actively involved in talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and thus it was apt at the time that Prince Hassan contribute to the ministerial selection process, said the source.

In the current process, the sources added, "the situation is different." According to the source, the Crown Prince and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath had planned their trip to London more than three months ago with the purpose of accompanying their son Prince Rashid back to the second school term at Harrow in England.

House confident of role in making government

By Ayman Al Safadi Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — The continuation of consultations with members of the Lower House of Parliament over the composition of the new government has held up the formation of the cabinet for the past two days as representatives of the five blocs and independent deputies in the House asserted that negotiations will end up in a satisfactory matter to both sides.

Parliamentarians Friday appeared confident that the prime minister-designate, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, who they said respects the House and its institutions, will not form his government before consulting with all the blocs that form the 80-member House.

By doing this, observers say, Sharif Zeid will not only be pursuing a democratic way of forming a government but will also ensure the widest parliamentary base for his government which is expected to win a stronger vote of confidence than that of Dr. Abdul Salam Majali's cabinet.

Though Sharif Zeid had not contacted all parliamentary groups by yesterday evening, parliamentarians were expecting this to happen before the new cabinet is announced Saturday or Sunday.

The largest and most coherent bloc that Sharif Zeid will have to deal with is the 17-member Islamic Action Front (IAF), which has sent many signs that it is willing to reach a good working relationship with the prime minister.

Though the Islamists were not expected to join the new government as a group, sources said the IAF will be consulted on its formation. In what was seen as a signal that the Islamists are willing to join the government in an effort to break away from their isolation in the House and the political arena in general, IAF sources said the absolute veto against joining the executive authority was no longer in effect and their participation will depend on the choice of the ministerial team and the programme of the new cabinet.

The last time the Islamists

joined the government was in 1991 when then Prime Minister Mudar Badran agreed with them on a 14-point programme that sought to meet many of their demands.

The Islamists have been out of the government since June 1991 and their relations with the executive authority reached its worst level after Dr. Majali formed his government in May last year. However, the reduced weight of the Islamists in the House and probably on the street is sure to deny them the strong bargaining power they had in 1989 when they had 23 parliamentary seats and about 10 supporters.

In the current House, the IAF has only 17 seats and less than five supporters and their relations with other political groups and parliamentary blocs suffered a blow when some Islamists boycotted the speech from the Throne with which His Majesty King Hussein opened the 12th Parliament in October.

But signs that the Islamists

(Continued on page 7)

'Jordan is a state of institutions, governments reflect continuity'

By Sa'ad Siliwani Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The outgoing government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali has left behind a legacy of \$5,552 million in foreign debt, down from the nearly \$7 billion it inherited. The new government of Prime Minister-designate Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will have to work hard to ensure the rescheduling or writing off of a great part of Jordan's foreign debt.

General indicators say that the strongest candidate to fill the finance portfolio in Sharif Zeid's cabinet is Basel Jandaneh, a veteran finance minister who has played a major role in rescheduling Jordan's debts to the London

and Paris clubs before outgoing Finance Minister Sami Qamhob took over 18 months ago. Mr. Qamhob says it is not important who occupies the finance portfolio since, Jordan is a state of institutions with clear-cut economic policies.

In a statement to Al Rai and the Jordan Times Mr. Qamhob said: "We are all in one trench. It is the trench of the homeland."

"The policy followed is continuous and based on handing responsibility from one generation to the other to ensure Jordan's march and achieve its ambitions and aspirations," he said. The Majali government achieved the most significant

political achievement in more than 20 years by concluding the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, he said.

The Majali government, helped by political and other circumstances, was also able to ensure the write-off of \$831 million of Jordan's foreign debts — \$702 million owed to the United States, \$74 million to Britain and the remaining amount to France and Germany.

Dr. Majali's government has also rescheduled \$2.2 billion of foreign debts whose maturity dates fall in 1995, 1996 and mid-97, according to Mr. Qamhob.

This, he said, pushes the Jordanian economy forward, saves resources for local investments and enhances Jordan's foreign currency reserves.



Sami Qamhob



Basel Jandaneh

dan's foreign currency reserves. Answering a question on the volume of loans borrowed by Dr. Majali's government and the volume of repayments, Mr. Qamhob said the government had borrowed \$470 million to sup-

port the balance of payments and the Kingdom's foreign currency reserve, while it repaid \$570 million. Mr. Qamhob called for an intensification of efforts of the private and public sectors and further liberalisation of the national economy.

Eyes focused on foreign portfolio, economy team

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — All bets remained off Friday as to who would assume the key portfolios of foreign affairs and the economic team as Prime Minister-designate Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker continued consultations on the make-up of his cabinet.

Observers said there were several "cross-wirings" that appeared to preempt the appointments of some key figures to the exclusion of others and a lot depended on the decision of His Majesty King Hussein on who will be the next Royal Court chief to fill the post vacated by Sharif Zeid as he moves to the Prime Ministry.

One of the main factors that could determine the appointments is personality clashes among some of the possible nominees who have worked together in the past in various capacities but found their "chemistries" did not mix, according to the observers.

Observers were looking for signs whether Sharif Zeid would bring back most of his colleagues in his former cabinets and if so how many. "Some of the cabinet members used to work closely together and interacted well as a team, particularly in the key portfolios," said an observer. "It would be interesting to see whether Sharif Zeid would opt for some members of the teams or the teams in their entirety."

The portfolios of foreign



Marwan Al Qassem



Abdul Karim Kabariti

affairs and the economic team — the ministries of planning, industry and trade and finance — are seen as the most important in the government. As such, eyes were focused on possible nominees to fill these posts.

Three names were heard Friday as possible contenders to assuming the foreign affairs portfolio. They were of Marwan Al Qassem, who now serves as King Hussein's political advisor, Deputy Abdul Karim Kabariti, head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House of Parliament, and Faysal Tarawneh, Jordan's ambassador to Washington. The names of Dr. Kamal Shaer and Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, both serving members of the Upper House of Parliament, were also mentioned as possible candidates for the job. As far as the foreign affairs portfolio was concerned, speculation was that if the King

decides to retain Mr. Qassem, who served as foreign minister in several cabinets, as chief of Royal Court, a post Mr. Qassem filled in the late 1980s, then Mr. Kabariti would have the job of foreign minister.

Mr. Kabariti, who is a two-term member of Parliament from Aqaba and a three-time minister in different cabinets, was asked to become foreign minister in the government of Abdul Salam Majali in the third reshuffle Dr. Majali carried out in June 1994 (the first reshuffle was in 1993 when Mohammad Adwan was appointed tourism minister to replace Yanal Hikmat who was moved to the Royal Court, and the second in January 1994). But Mr. Kabariti declined the offer.

But he has since assumed the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the

(Continued on page 7)

Washington meeting to discuss Mideast bank

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Experts from 37 countries and international organisations will meet in Washington on Jan. 10-11 to discuss setting up a Middle East development bank, the State Department announced on Thursday.

The meeting follows the Casablanca Middle East/North Africa economic summit two months ago which called for a study of funding mechanisms including a regional development bank to back up the Middle East peace process.

Israel, the Palestinians and a number of Arab states are taking part in the talks. But Syria and Lebanon, which have yet to reach a peace agreement with the Jewish state, have stayed away. The United States, the European Union and Japan are also involved.

U.S. officials say the proposed bank could be modelled on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, set up to aid post-communist Eastern Europe, but they hope it could be set up more rapidly.

Next week's meeting will be the first in a series leading up to a second economic summit in Amman later this year, where conclusions will be announced.

The State Department said the aim is to finance regional infrastructure projects, promote the private sector

and regional economic policy reform and dialogue.

State Department acting spokesperson Christine Shelly said: "This meeting constitutes a key element of the follow-up to the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit held in Casablanca, Morocco, in October 1994, which called for a group of experts to examine different funding mechanisms to support the peace process, including the creation of a Middle East Bank for Economic Cooperation and Development. Attending the meeting will be 37 regional and extra-regional parties participating in and supporting the Middle East peace process."

The Casablanca declaration called for a group of experts to examine different funding mechanisms to support the peace process, including the creation of a Middle East Development Bank. The Jan. 10-11 meeting is the first gathering of this group of experts.

Proposals for the creation of a Middle East development bank originate with the core regional participants in the peace process. The Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles signed in September 1993 called for the creation of such a bank. Jordan and Egypt joined this call in meetings of the four parties in Cairo in late 1994. In October, President Bill Clinton told the Jordanian Parlia-

ment that the U.S. would take the lead in organising interested countries to consider creation of a properly structured regional development bank.

The meeting will consider financing mechanisms for economic development and the creation of new institutions to address key regional needs which are not adequately addressed through existing efforts. These include: the development of regional infrastructure, promotion of the private sector, and enhanced regional economic policy reform and dialogue. Regional development banks exist in other areas and have proved to be effective channels to leverage significant assistance from private and public sources.

Any new institutions would be designed to meet the region's unique economic and political needs and would complement, not duplicate, the work of existing institutions. The basic objective would be to add an effective economic pillar of support for the historic achievements to the peace process since Madrid.

The meeting will be the first in a series of meetings to examine these issues in detail, leading to the second Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in Amman, later this year, where key conclusions would be announced.



AL KHADER PROTEST: An elderly Palestinian argues with an Israeli military police officer as he was prevented among others from entering the West Bank a Jewish settler dead and Palestinians to held a demonstration in the village of Al Khader on Friday against the

Iraq says sanctions causing massive deaths

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Pointing to recent estimates that half a million Iraqi children have died since the United Nations imposed severe economic sanctions on Baghdad in 1990, an Iraqi government spokesman has said that the deaths were the planned result "of a systematic effort by foreign forces to annihilate the younger segment of our population."

The estimated deaths have shown the embargo to be "a weapon no less extreme than any previously known weapons of mass destruction," said Sultan Al Shawi, a member of the Iraqi National Assembly (parliament), during a public lecture he gave at the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation. Mr. Shawi said one million Iraqis died as a result of the sanctions.

Mr. Shawi's statements come two weeks after a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) official in Baghdad gave matching death estimates, and warned that another 1.5 million youngsters were in danger of dying if the sanctions continued much longer.

Due to lack of medicines and hospital equipment, deaths from diseases among children under five had soared from 7,110 in 1989, before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent imposition of sanctions by the U.N. Security Council, to 49,762 in 1993. An additional 38,844 deaths were caused in the same category between January and September of 1994, said Mr. Shawi.

He said severe malnutrition, once extremely uncommon in Iraq, was now abundant among young children in the same age category, and 16,006 toddlers had been reported as being in extreme states of emaciation due to lack of food for 1994 whereas only 433 such cases had been registered in 1990. Kwashiorkor, a second symptom of

severe malnutrition in which the child's belly becomes markedly bloated and distended and commonly seen in many famine-stricken African countries, had been "completely unknown in Iraq for many years before the war," Mr. Shawi said. But now, he said, an average of 1,744 new cases of kwashiorkor are being recorded every month.

"All of this is happening after the U.N.'s 1990 Charter on the Rights of Children stated that every child has the unconditional right to life and health," whether in times of peace or of war, Mr. Shawi said, and after "strong promises by all signatories to the covenant to take special steps to safeguard the nutritional requirements of children and pregnant women, and to work to lower death rates among nursing children."

A U.S. State Department report released on March 31, 1993, claimed the Security Council had made good-faith efforts to provide aid programmes for Iraq's civilian population in order to safeguard basic health and nutrition standards in the country under the sanctions. However, said the report, the Iraqi government had consistently blocked all such efforts in any way possible, including harassment of relief workers sent to the country by both the U.N. and other international relief organisations.

The report further noted that Iraq had categorically rejected a Security Council provision for funds from limited sales of Iraqi oil to be channelled into a \$933 million a year fund for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi population.

The Iraqi government has rejected the provisions as a violation of the country's internal sovereignty — an assertion which Mr. Shawi repeated when questioned on the matter by an audience member at the Shoman Foundation Tuesday night.

NEWS IN BRIEF

90 non-Palestinian Arabs in Israeli jails

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israel is holding a total of 90 non-Palestinian Arabs including 42 Lebanese, 22 Syrians and 19 Jordanians in its jails, according to a list published here Friday. It has also detained two Egyptians, two Algerians, one Iraqi, a Sudanese and a Kuwaiti arrested since 1985, according to the list drawn up from different sources in five Israeli jails. Four other Syrians and one Algerian are being held in Khiam prison in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon, according to a committee monitoring Lebanese prisoners in Israel. The committee, set up after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, called in its statement for an Arab committee to be established "to defend all Arab prisoners in Israeli jails." The list which named each of those being held, was drawn up using information from various sources including prisoners recently released and messages from inside sent via visits from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Some 350 Lebanese and Palestinians are held in Khiam jail opened by Israel in 1983 and closed to the ICRC and other humanitarian organisations.

American Zionists split over call to aid PLO

The Jerusalem Post

A CALL by the president of the American Zionist Movement for American Jewish groups to contribute aid to the PLO has split the American Jewish community.

Tsomet/USA has broken ranks with the AZM, saying that Seymour Reich overstepped his role.

At issue is an opinion piece, written from American Jewish newspapers, in which Reich said that American Jews should push for U.S. funding for the PLO.

Under the headline, "Yes, the PLO should receive U.S. aid," Reich wrote: "Whether we should help the PLO with American aid is not the real question. Whether we should help Israel by encouraging assistance to the fledgling Palestinian Authority is the fundamental issue for the American Jewish community and the American people."

The effort to deny aid to the Palestinian Authority, he wrote, "plays right into the hands of Islamic extremists and other enemies of Israel."

Following Reich's op-ed piece, Howard Weber, a member of the Tsomet/USA board, said his group, the American affiliate of the party led by Rafel Eitan, was suspending its membership in AZM.

"The AZM, as an umbrella organisation covering 21 Zionist groups with diverse political philosophies, should not be taking political positions," said Weber, who also resigned from the post he held on the AZM cabinet.

Weber contended that Reich's op-ed piece disregarded the views of some constituent groups and that the organisation has taken a stand for which it has no mandate. "How can an umbrella organisation whose membership includes both Labour Zionists of America and Likud USA ever feel justified in taking a political stance?"

Reich, past president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, noted that the movement previously has taken political positions, including its support for democracy for Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence in the U.S. on charges of spying for Israel.

Hamas official to head new Islamic court

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has set up a new Islamic court and named a leading member of the Hamas movement as its head, Palestinian officials said Friday. Sheikh Hamed Suleiman Bitawi from the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is to head the new appeal court which is supposed to be based in East Jerusalem. But for the time being it will sit in Nablus on the occupied West Bank as Israel has banned PLO activists in East Jerusalem. "The fact that I don't share the political opinions of the Palestinian Authority does not pose an obstacle to my appointment at the head of this court as we are all Muslims," Sheikh Hamed told AFP. Islamic courts are charged with handling civilian matters such as marriages, divorces and anything related to Islamic law.

Egyptian journalist's detention decried

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian opposition journalists said on Friday the continued detention of prominent Islamist journalist and politician Adel Hussein was politically motivated to intimidate and silence anti-government critics. "It is a political move that proves the challenging nature of the regime and its determination to suppress the opposition. It is a plot to silence any free opinion, mainly the Islamists," Magdi Hussein, editor-in-chief of the Islamist Al Shah newspaper, in which Mr. Hussein is a regular columnist, told Reuters. Mr. Hussein, also nephew of the detained journalist, said the prosecution decision had no legal grounds. Prosecutors on Thursday renewed for 15 more days the detention of Mr. Hussein, also secretary-general of the Labour Party, which is allied to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and calls for the implementation of Islamic Sharia law.

Sudan, Libya and Chad mull merger

TUNIS (R) — Sudan, Libya and Chad are discussing a merger of their three countries after Chad's elections scheduled for April, Sudan's interior minister said on Friday. Leaders of the three countries (Omar Hassan Al Bashir of Sudan, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya and Idriss Deby of Chad) "discussed the issue of unity last September during the celebrations of the Libyan revolution anniversary," General Taieb Kheir told Reuters. "As far as I know, the point of view of our brothers in Chad is that they are preparing for elections and that they must seek the opinion of their people, and after that it will be possible for them to take big steps needing cohesion between the government and the people," he added. General elections in Chad are due on April 9.

Murderer hanged in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AFP) — A convicted murderer was hanged on Friday, in the first execution this year in Saudi Arabia, the Interior Ministry said. The ministry, quoted by state-run television, said Nasser Al Anizi was executed in Al Hail, north of the capital, for having shot dead another man over a "personal dispute." In 1994, 58 people were beheaded in the Saudi Kingdom, according to a toll compiled from official statements.

Middle East parties remain committed to peace — U.S.

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Acting State Department spokesperson Christine Shelly said Thursday that despite recent outbreaks of violence in the West Bank and Gaza, the United States believes that Israel and the Palestinians remain strongly committed to the success of the peace process.

Asked about a recent series of shoot-outs between Israeli and Palestinian security forces, Ms. Shelly noted that the U.S. condemns all violence in the region but does not comment about specific incidents.

"We certainly are aware of the fact that it represents some frustration on the ground," Ms. Shelly said. "But we feel that there's a very strong commitment to the success of the peace process. We continue to have contact with the parties in this regard."

"We recognise, and certainly the parties (do), that this process was never going to be an easy one, but even in the face of the incidents which do continue and obviously can have an adverse effect on the environment, we still feel that the parties involved are committed to implementing the agreements that they have reached and that's what the process is about."

Against the backdrop of incidents like these, it is very important to do whatever can be done to improve the atmosphere and show the positive benefits associated with the changing situation, she said, "but we know it's going to be a long process, a difficult process."

Perry trip

Defence Secretary William Perry will discuss the Golan Heights in general terms when he visits the Middle East but otherwise intends to

avoid the issue, a senior defence official has said.

Mr. Perry arrives in Cairo on Saturday for two days of talks before continuing on Sunday to Israel, where the peace process has been marred by turmoil in the West Bank and rising tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza.

"We do not intend to get involved in the peace process," said the defence official who spoke privately.

But Mr. Perry's itinerary includes a visit to the Golan Heights, the main sticking point in peace talks between Syria and Israel.

President Bill Clinton has said he would consider deploying U.S. troops in the Golan as part of a multinational peacekeeping force once a peace agreement is reached.

The defence official said Mr. Perry's discussions with the Israelis on the Golan Heights and the possible deployment of U.S. troops would be "in general terms, but there will not be particular discussions."

"The peace process has not reached the stage where there has been a specific request or indeed where Syria and Israel has agreed on this. It would be premature to get into any detail," the official said.

"Will we discuss in principle what some of the possibilities are? Yes," said the defence official.

Syria is demanding a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan while Israel has offered a phased, partial withdrawal ahead of final negotiations on a peace with open borders and full diplomatic recognition.

Further clouding the issue of U.S. troops in the Golan is whether the Republican-controlled Congress will move — as Republican lead-

ers have threatened — to block U.S. participation in future peacekeeping missions.

The Perry trip comes amid published reports that Israel and China collaborated on developing and producing a new Chinese fighter, the F10, that was based on the Lavi, a joint Israeli-U.S. fighter jet project that was abandoned in 1987.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry confirmed that the United States was investigating possible technology transfers to China by Israel.

"Those types of reports concern us very deeply," he said, adding that Lynn Davis, undersecretary of state for international security affairs, had held "substantive discussions with the government of Israel on a range of these types of issues."

The suspected technology transfers could be raised in talks with the Israelis but would not be a priority, Mr. McCurry said.

Mr. Perry will be the first U.S. defence secretary to visit the Middle East since 1991. He is expected to travel to Pakistan and India after leaving Israel.

"There are no crises in the relationship, no gaping wound that has to be bandaged," said the defence official. "We are essentially interested in reaffirming that both these countries are integral to our strategy in the region."

Mr. Perry said following a speech at the National Press Club on Thursday that he looked forward to visiting Pakistan and India and holding talks to improve bilateral military ties with those two potential nuclear antagonists.

He will be the first U.S. defence secretary to visit South Asia since former Secretary Frank Carlucci in 1987.

Israel seeks interim period in Golan pullout

The Jerusalem Post

ISRAEL is demanding a four-year interim period between implementation of the first and second phases of a withdrawal from Golan Heights territory, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told the Knesset Wednesday.

A senior government official later confirmed that this was the government's "opening position" in peace talks with Syria.

"As far as the timetable is concerned, we keep drawing Syrian attention to the timetable with the Egyptians, in which at least four years went by between the first and second stages, while relations were normalised after the first stage," said Peres.

The foreign minister was replying to six motions to the agenda on last week's Alexandria summit meeting attended by the leaders of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Peres said he was "not enthusiastic" about the summit, and that he found the resolutions regarding Israeli-Syrian negotiations unacceptable. During a visit to Cairo on Tuesday to discuss the peace process with Palestinian leaders, Peres also met with President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa to discuss the summit.

"I told my Egyptian colleagues: 'It's okay if you want to fulfill a mediating role between us and the Syrians,' said Peres, "but if that's the case, give your support to peace, not to one of the sides involved in the talks." I told them that their support for the Syrian position, even if it is only verbal, causes the Syrians to harden their position."

Peres said he also discussed reported Arab fears that Israel wanted to dominate the Middle East economically. "I told them that we are not giving up control of Arab territory in order to win control of the Arab economy. 'All the world is running after us. If you don't want our help, that's fine. We are not pressing you and we are not asking anything of you. Just say so and we will leave. You don't want to benefit from Israeli contacts, Israel skill, that's fine with us. We are not putting pressure on you and we are not asking anything of you.' The answer we received (from the Egyptians) on the spot was 'heaven forbid.'"

Peres said that Mubarak had promised in the talks that he would support Israel's inclusion in a Mediterranean forum organised by Egypt and France, to which Israel had not been invited.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 731111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Pollards
17:35 Les Intrepides
18:00 Les Intrepides
18:05 News in French
19:15 Fa Ut Pas Rovers
19:30 Harry and Hendersons
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Murder She Wrote
22:30 News in English
22:35 Friends
23:10 Major Dad

PRAYER TIMES
05:10 Fajr
12:32 (Sunrise) Duha
13:41 Dhuhr
14:47 Asr
16:50 Maghrib
18:12 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swithead, Tel. 510740
Assistance of God Church, Tel. 63275
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

TERMINALS
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625236
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Warm weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp. 5/15
Agaba 9/24
Dhaker 2/16
Jordan Valley 9/21

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15, Agaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 71 per cent. Agaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 736011
Dr. Fakher Belfeld 663412
Dr. Youssef Nasser 751144
Dr. Khaloud Asfour 666873
Firm pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Ascone pharmacy 637055
Nairoth pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847652

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Hila 279773
Alquds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaschi 962799
Khalifah pharmacy 965417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 890390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 623662
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 630100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Akhlah Maternity, J. Amn. 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 623662
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 661174
Queen Alia Hospital 622400
University Hospital 845945
Al-Mushter Hospital 662279
The Islamic, Abdali 641646
Al-Ahli, Abdali 771012
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/26
Army, Marjeh 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 622400
Amal Hospital 674125
Zarqa Court Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983323
IRBID:
Palace Baita Hospital (02)27355
Great Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital (02)34710
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)31411

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:20 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
08:35 Agaba (RJ)
08:15 Rome (add) (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 Geneva, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:40 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:00 Madrid (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
18:25 Colombo (RJ)
18:35 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
18:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Damascus (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
22:25 Rome (add) (RJ)
08:15 Geneva, Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
03:15 London, Agaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 Vienna (OS)
15:45 Rome, Larnaca (AZ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:25 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
11:15 Rome (add) (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 Geneva, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:40 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:00 Madrid (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
18:25 Colombo (RJ)
18:35 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
18:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Damascus (RJ)
17:55 London, Berlin (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
22:25 Rome (add) (RJ)
08:15 Geneva, Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
03:15 London, Agaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 Vienna (OS)
15:45 Rome, Larnaca (AZ)

HAZAR RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 5:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/400
Banana 600
Banana (Mekassar) 620
Cabbage 200/150
Carrot 280/150
Cauliflower 280/200
Cucumber (large) 200/150
Cucumber (small) 320/200
Eggplant 320/250
Garlic 420/320
Grape (small) 240/140
Lemon 270/160
Marrow (large) 150/120
Marrow (small) 340/220
Onion (green) 300/200
Onion (dry) 350/280
Orange 520/320
Pepper (hot) 540/300
Pepper (sweet) 650/480
Potato 320/200
Radish 220/120
Spinach 720/380
String Beans 650/400
Tomato 400/200

Jordan first to sign U.N. rapid deployment agreement

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Adnan Abu Odeh and United Nations Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Forces Kofi Annan Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding on Jordan's participation in the U.N. Rapid Deployment Force (RDF).

Under the memorandum, Jordan agrees to provide the U.N. within 10 days with its requirements of resources, including human resources to be used for the U.N.'s peacekeeping operations worldwide.

Jordan is the first country to sign such a memorandum with the U.N.

Landing the Kingdom's initiative, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, said Jordan is the only member state who has signed a memorandum of understanding with the U.N. to participate in the RDF.

The idea of establishing a U.N. RDF has been contained in the agenda for peace proposed in 1992 by Dr. Ghali. To translate this idea into action, the U.N. General Secretariat called in

April 1993 for a meeting of the member states concerned to exchange views on the subject.

In September 1993 a U.N. delegation met in Amman with various Jordanian officials from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Transportation, Health, Communications, Finance, as well as with the Armed Forces and the Public Security Department.

Later in September, a Royal Decree was issued endorsing Jordan's participation in the U.N. Rapid Deployment Force, and the Kingdom and the U.N. worked out details of Jordan's participation.

The memorandum can be amended any time provided that both parties agree to such amendment.

It can also be cancelled provided that a three-month notice to this effect is given by any of the signatory parties.

The Jordanian Armed Forces headquarters will serve as the focal point responsible for mobilisation, coordination and preparation of the force, according to the memorandum's provisions.



Farid Ali Saad
laid to rest

AMMAN (J.T.) — Farid Ali Saad, a former minister and prominent businessman who passed away Thursday at the age of 67, was laid to rest at Um Al Hiran Cemetery near Amman Friday.

His Majesty King Hussein delegated Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid to attend the funeral of Mr. Saad and offer condolences to his family.

Born in the Palestinian town of Um Al Fahm, Mr. Saad studied at Al Najah School in Nablus before obtaining his bachelor's degree in science from the American University of Beirut (AUB).

He worked until 1935 as a science teacher and school principal.

In 1935, he became a district officer in the Palestine government till 1943 when he became manager of the Arab Bank in Haifa.

A strong advocate of the Palestinian cause, Mr. Saad was a member of the War Economic Advisory Council of Palestine government from 1943-1946.

Mr. Saad served twice as minister of finance, and in those two tenures donated his government salary to the University of Jordan's Needy Students Fund.

He was also chairman and managing director of the Jordan Tobacco and Cigarettes Company in Amman for more than 50 years, vice chairman of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company until recently, chairman of the Bata Company until recently, chairman of the National Grindlays Bank Ltd., and a member of the Senate from 1951-1955 and 1984-1988.

The deceased was also founder and member of the Arab Orphans Committee in Haifa in 1940 which moved its offices in Amman and now runs a hotel management school in Jerusalem.

In addition, Mr. Saad was the first president of the Rotary Club in Amman, a trustee of the University of Jordan, trustee emeritus of the AUB, a member of the Institute for Palestine Studies-Beirut, chairman of the Jordan Printing and Packaging Company and member of the Geneva-based Welfare Association.

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Amman intends to host follow-up economic meeting Officials seek to take advantage of Casablanca momentum

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government is proceeding with plans to host a follow-up meeting to last year's Casablanca summit on economic development of the Middle East and North Africa, and no decision has been taken yet to defer the conference by several months, according to officials.

Nahil Ammari, director-general of the Ministry of Planning, was quoted as saying in comments in the local press that a company entrusted with the organisational details of the conference had recommended that it be held in mid-September instead of June as originally scheduled.

But the government has not taken a final decision on the suggestion, Mr. Ammari told Al Aswaq newspaper.

As such, for all practical purposes, the conference would take place in June unless a decision to the contrary is taken.

Senior officials closely involved in preparations for the meeting said it was unlikely that Jordan would decide to postpone the conference, given that the Kingdom would like to take advantage of the momentum created by the Casablanca meeting.

The Casablanca meeting served as a forum for Jordan to present projects, some of them in coordination with Israel and others related to the Kingdom's infrastructure and development. The projects, worth over \$18 billion in total, involved all sectors of the country's life, including health, education, energy, transport, water, tourism and communications.

After the Casablanca conference was over, however, the Ministry of Planning launched efforts to identify high priority projects and studies on them, with a view to coming up with more focused and defined plans to raise finances and implement them.

Mr. Ammari was quoted as saying that the Canadian government had undertaken to finance the studies on the various projects and a three-member Canadian team started work in this regard in December.

In the meantime, the various ministries are also involved in trying to reflect allocations in the fiscal budget for specific projects and make them compatible with the projects and proposals expected to be presented at the Amman conference.

Mr. Ammari said a steering committee would be formed soon to take charge

of the conference. According to other officials, this committee would include representatives of all ministries and departments related to the conference and its deliberations. Various sub-committees would be formed at ministries and departments to coordinate internal preparations for the meeting.

The government is hoping that a new law on incentives for foreign investors would be in place by the time the conference takes place. The law is widely seen as offering some of the most attractive incentives offered to foreign investors by any country in the immediate Middle East region.

Coupled with efforts to upgrade Jordan's status as a haven for foreign investments, the review of infrastructure and developments is expected to produce a more focused approach to the governments and private sector representatives expected to attend the Amman conference.

"The projects presented in Casablanca are under close review now, with a view to narrowing down the options and defining more clearly the parameters of each project," said a senior official closely involved in Jordan's presentation to the economic conference.

In Casablanca, the Jordanian presentation was supported by a set of documents and booklets on almost every aspect of life in the country, including a sector analysis of the proposed projects and publications on the investment climate in the Kingdom.

The net result of the review, according to the official, would mean certain amendments to the scope of some projects and eliminating some of the others.

For instance, the official said, the proposals presented in Casablanca involved several alternative projects to address the water shortages facing the countries of the region.

"Given the varying degrees of the economic and financial feasibility of the different projects, we have to narrow them down to the most feasible and realistic proposals," said the official. "There is little sense in continuing to discuss a host of options without such discussions could continue forever without anyone reaching a clear-cut conclusion."

Jordan will also be coordinating with Israel some of the projects that have bearing on both countries and also those with a regional dimension. Private sector participation

is a key element in Jordan's approach. The Jordanian team to the Casablanca conference was headed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who, in a keynote speech at the gathering, reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to creating a free market economy through reforms and to giving a higher-profile role to the private sector in all aspects of development.

In his comments to Al Aswaq, Mr. Ammari said the private sector would be invited to make its proposals and present projects at the Amman conference.

Government officials note that the government's five-year development plan which took off in 1993 designated a major role for the private sector while confining the role of the government to mostly infrastructure related projects essential to encourage private sector investments.

"The development plan remains a focal point," said another official. "But the new realities of peace in the region have brought about contrastingly different considerations and possibilities into view and, hopefully, all these would be closely studied and consolidated into an integrated approach at the Amman conference."

Experts seek new habitat for Arabian oryxherd

By Rama Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — With the reintroduction of the Arabian oryx in Jordan, and the success of breeding, foreign and Arab experts are now faced with finding additional habitats for the large straight-horned antelope.

Following a workshop on protecting the Arabian oryx, which concluded on Thursday, Chris Johnson, director of conservation at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), said, "finding a place for the oryx to live is the greatest problem because it requires a very specialised habitat and large open spaces."

Mr. Johnson explained that the Kingdom's "Shomari Wildlife Reserve started with (the reintroduction of) eight oryx; now the number has jumped to 150 heads and we've got all the oryx in one place. It is possible that a disease could spread and kill them all."

Another problem, according to Mr. Johnson, is that this oryx population was bred from a small number. "There could be a problem with inbreeding, and this means you tend to get weaker animals in the herd," Mr. Johnson explained.

Specialists to the workshop also discussed ways to stop the oryx from being killed or captured by hunters, and how to keep them healthy.

The workshop ended with suggestions for study and implementation by the RSCN.

The four international and five local experts who attended the workshop first suggested locating a new habitat for the oryx. "We are going to invite specialists in species survival to assess which site would be best for the oryx," Mr. Johnson said.

Secondly, it is important to negotiate with the local residents of whatever area is decided upon and encourage them to become involved in the entire process of reintroduction so that they become the guardians of the new herd, the workshop participants agreed.

They also decided that the

herd must be split. "We need to create another small herd and put it in another place." The herd's movement and health must be monitored to ensure they are not hunted and that they are breeding successfully.

Issa Shabin of the RSCN said that the society will study the suggestions and recommendations and will ask the government to help by offering it a new location for the oryx herd.

The oryx had been extinct in Jordan for 60 years before its reintroduction to the Kingdom in 1978.

After the conclusion of the three-day workshop, the participants held a small "born free" ceremony by releasing a two-year old saker falcon which was confiscated from a trader who was trying to sell the bird illegally.

"We released this bird to the wild so that it can live and breed and help increase its population," Mr. Shabin told the Jordan Times.

"The saker falcon is targeted by many hunters who want to sell this animal or train it for hunting purposes," Mr. Shabin explained.

The bird does not breed in the Middle East, but migrates here in the autumn and spring and spends its winters in North America, Mr. Shabin said.

"Hunting or trading this bird is illegal because it is an endangered species," Mr. Shabin said, adding that in Europe the saker falcon population has decreased by 80 per cent because of destruction to its habitat.

The RSCN was established in 1966 with the aim of preserving all the elements of nature including wild life. Seven reserves have been established, and five more will be completed by the end of the century.

One of the main objects of the society is to create public awareness of the importance of preserving nature and its resources specifically amongst students.

The seven existing wild reserves are Shomari, Azraq, Zoubia, Wadi Mujib, Wadi Rum, Dana and the Aqaba marine reserve.

Support committee collects medical supplies for Chechenya

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Committee for the Support of the Caucasian Chechen Republic (JCSCP) has collected between 55-60 cubic metres of medical supplies to send to the embattled Republic of Chechenya, prominent members of the committee said at a lecture on Thursday evening.

The lecture, held at Nadi Aljil near the Seventh Circle, was arranged by the women's sub-committee of the JCSCP and attended by around 200 people, mostly women ranging upwards in age from about 13-years-old.

The speakers, who included former Minister of Public Works and President of the JCSCP Said Beano, Deputy of the Lower House and JCSCP spokesperson

Tonjan Faisal and head of the International Department at the Royal Scientific Society Ghali Odeh, spoke about the general background of Chechenya, the mentality of its people versus that of Russians.

Ms. Faisal addressed the issues of civil and human rights and the right to self determination. While Mr.

Beano explained how the "Chechen republic had never been a part of Russia" because of its declaration of independence and its subsequent approval by parliament on Nov. 27, 1990.

Mr. Beano told the Jordan Times that the purpose of the committee and Thursday's lecture were to explain and make known the current situation and its implications to the Chechen and Circassian community in Jordan.

The size of the community lies between 50,000 and 80,000 and is regarded as one of the largest outside the Caucasus region.

In a statement recently sent to the Jordan Times by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Amman, the

committee reported on its efforts in Grozny, the break-away republic capital, and in the surrounding area. The ICRC said it has provided medical supplies to 17 hospitals including those in Grozny, and that the assistance distributed since the outbreak of hostilities in December had been sufficient to treat around 2,000 wounded.

In the meantime the JCSCP continues to rally support for the cause and has produced stickers, posters and printed material calling for the withdrawal of Russian forces from the republic.

Mr. Beano also said that a petition declaring support for the right of the Chechen people to self-determination had been circulated and thousands of signatures collected.

"We have also collected cash and donations in-kind, but we are calling for more. So far we have amassed 55-60 cubic metres of drugs and medical supplies," Mr. Beano added.

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Kingdom plans 'Jordan Week' in Japan

By Cathy King

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With an eye towards boosting Jordan-Japan ties in all sectors a Jordan week in Japan, and a symposium on Jordanian-Japanese relations will be held in May, Sharif Jamil Ben Nasser confirmed.

"Jordanian and Japanese relations are based on the personal relationship and the mutual respect by the two royal families, thus laying the foundation upon which we may build a better future," Sharif Jamil, Jordan-Japan Friendship Association chairman, told the Jordan Times.

The aim to Jordan's week and the symposium is to provide the Japanese with more knowledge of the Kingdom, he said, adding that it will further Japanese recognition of Jordan as the region's economic base.

Potential exists for joint ventures in all sectors, Sharif Jamil said, but conceded that conveying a message of Jordan's suitability as an economic platform had its difficulties.

Cultural and language differences and the distance separating the two countries are hurdles to be

overcome. Despite the Kingdom's stability, Sharif Jamil said, its location in a troubled area had distorted its image. One consequence of which being no direct air routes, although 18 million Japanese tourists come here annually, he said.

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who last visited Japan in November 1990, the symposium entitled, "peace and beyond: the roles of Jordan and Japan" will be a one-day event held at the United Nations University in Tokyo.

It will address, Sharif Jamil said, Jordan's position amid current Middle Eastern events, the region's future during and after the peace process, and also the involvement of Japan in the multilateral track of the peace process.

The keynote speaker will be Crown Prince Hassan ... and there will be meetings to follow up the symposium which should generate concrete momentum to it," he said.

Jordan's week in Japan, May 22-May 27, will include trade and food fairs and a picture and antiquities exhibition.

The trade fair has been allocated 550 square metres in Seibu Department Store, which may receive as many as one million visitors, Sharif Jamil anticipates. Four million people are estimated to visit the store each month, he said.

The food fair, according to Sharif Jamil, requested by the Japanese, will be located at Yokomo Inter-Continental Hotel, and chefs from the Inter-Continental Amman will strive to satisfy Japanese savour.

Last August, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali formed the national preparatory committee, comprised of high level members of the public and private sectors, to oversee Jordan's week in Japan.

The committee is headed by Institute of Diplomacy President Mazen Armouti, with Sharif Jamil acting in a dual capacity as honorary chairman and head of a subcommittee for fund-raising.

Dr. Armouti told the Jordan Times that a local fund-raising campaign will begin today with a reception for Jordanian agents of Japanese companies.

Local fund-raising is intended to cover costs incurred in Jordan during prepa-

rations. He said that later there will be separate meetings for phosphates, potash, industrial and trade companies with Japan's representatives in Jordan.

"These will be partly in view of prospective privatisation and partly in view of joint ventures in downstream industries," Dr. Armouti explained.

Sharif Jamil added that participation of the Jordanian private sector in "Jordan's week in Japan" was open to all and to help cover participant expenditure, there would be special hotel tariffs and fund-raising efforts in Japan to assist with costs while there.

The first bilateral economic contact was established in the 1930's, Sharif Jamil said, when a Japanese mission came here to buy horses. In more recent years relations have rested upon the many exchanged visits between His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan and the Imperial House in Japan.

Japan has provided direct assistance to the Kingdom in the form of loans, volunteers, direct aid, trade and imports, he

said, and added: "There are lessons to be taken into account, remembering that since World War II Japan has risen out of the ashes to become an economic superpower."

Jordan's largest external indebtedness of around \$1.7 billion is to Japan.

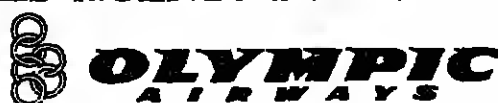
The inaugural flight of Royal Jordanian (RJ) to Osaka will mark the start of the event which will also be commemorated by the issuance of a first-day cover stamp.

RJ, the army and the air force will provide substantial assistance in the logistics, he said, and by various ministries involved.

Institutions expected to participate in the event sponsored and organised by the Institute of Diplomacy and the Middle East Institute of Japan, include Crown Prince Hassan's office, the Prime Ministry, the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Planning, Finance, Tourism, Information and Culture, the Jordanian Armed Forces, Royal Jordanian Airlines, universities and the Higher Council for Science and Technology, banks and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



DIRECTOR GENERAL AND STAFF OF GRAND TRAVEL AND TOURISM GENERAL SALES AGENTS FOR OLYMPIC AIRWAYS



WELCOMES THE GUEST OF
HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN
GREEK PRIME MINISTER
ANDREAS PAPANDREOU
AND HIS ACCOMPANYING DELEGATION
WISHING THE DELEGATION A HAPPY STAY IN JORDAN AND A
SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPEROUS VISIT, THAT WILL CULMINATE
IN BOLSTERING JORDANIAN-GREEK RELATIONS IN THE
INTEREST OF BOTH NATIONS.



Japan hopes calm will replace clashes at summit with U.S.

TOKYO (R) — Tokyo is hoping that a climate of calm will replace confrontation at a U.S.-Japan summit in Washington next week, giving the two nations a chance to assess just where their relationship should be heading.

"Ways to deepen U.S.-Japan relations, which are critical in the Asian-Pacific region, will top the meeting's agenda," Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama said Sunday, noting his Jan. 11 summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton comes at the start of a year marking the 50th anniversary of World War II's end.

Analysts of U.S.-Japan ties agree the summit is unlikely to yield anything like the fireworks seen at the February 1994 summit where Mr. Clinton met then-Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa.

Failure to clinch trade deals then only prompted talk of a confrontational new era in trans-Pacific ties, but also rocked financial markets, sending the yen soaring against the dollar.

Few expect a replay of that drama next week.

Behind this year's low-key mood are factors including domestic distractions for both leaders, greater attention to booming economies else-

where in Asia, and the resolution — in form if not in fact — of many of 1994's economic rows.

"In the United States, the president wants to have domestic achievements and for Mr. Murayama, the priority is also domestic issues," said political scientist Kenko Inoguchi.

Mr. Clinton faces a Republican Congress born of the Democrats' stunning electoral defeat in November. Where Japan will be placed on the U.S. congressional agenda remains to be seen.

"It's not clear if Japan will matter much in Congress — it may be absorbed with other things," one U.S.-Japan expert said.

Mr. Murayama, too, is dogged by domestic worries. These include fears that his Socialist Party may come apart and questions about how his unwieldy ruling coalition, which includes the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), will fare in parliament and in local elections next April.

The coalition faces a huge opposition bloc in the recently launched New Frontier Party, which aims to topple the government in general elections, maybe as soon as this autumn.

Concern has also been

raised about the health of the 70-year-old Murayama after he cancelled some official duties this week due to a cold.

Some in Japan worry that domestic distractions, combined with the growing attention paid by both countries to Asia outside Japan, is weakening the bilateral alliance.

In an article this week, monthly magazine *Sentaku* noted fears that the relationship was "hollowing out" as Washington turned inward and Tokyo failed to shoulder its global burdens.

Not all analysts agree. "It is true that the Asian-Pacific region is getting more important for both nations but this does not mean the bilateral tie is less important," Ms. Inoguchi said.

"Structurally, the tie is more important since there are issues, such as Asian-Pacific regional matters, in which U.S.-Japan joint management is needed," she said.

Regional economic and security issues, including North Korea's alleged nuclear programme, are expected to rank high on the summit agenda.

The two leaders will also discuss cooperation ahead of next November's meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation (APEC) forum in Osaka, western Japan.

As host, Japan wants to ensure the meeting's success despite differences among members over how to flesh out an ambitious accord, reached at last year's meeting in Jakarta, on toppling regional trade barriers within a quarter-century.

U.S. interest in Japan's efforts to deregulate its economy could come up at the summit, but bilateral trade disputes are expected to take a back seat.

The two sides in recent months have cleared away many of the rows highlighted in last year's economic talks.

After stagnating for months, talks on government procurement and insurance produced pacts last Oct. 1, although the two sides failed to resolve a tougher dispute over better access to Japan's market for cars and car parts.

Talks on auto trade, which accounts for two-thirds of the \$60 billion U.S.-Japan trade gap, are set to resume later this month.

Negotiators have also come close to reaching an agreement on another area given high priority by Washington, better access to Japan's huge financial services market.



File photo dated Dec. 18, 1994 showing South African Housing Minister Joe Slovo at the ANC National Congress. The former South African Communist Party leader during the apartheid years and minister of housing in the

S. African communist leader Slovo dies

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Joe Slovo, a life-long fighter against apartheid who went from a Lithuanian hamlet to become housing minister in South Africa's first democratic government, died of cancer Friday at the age of 68.

President Nelson Mandela, a close friend who saw Mr. Slovo at his home Thursday night shortly before his death, described the minister as "a great African patriot".

"Joe Slovo dedicated his life to the struggle for justice, democracy and freedom in our country," Mr. Mandela said in a statement announcing his death from bone marrow cancer.

Mr. Slovo — the first white member of the African National Congress' National Executive — died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Johannesburg's Observatory District where he lived with his second wife, Helena.

His wife and daughters Shaun, Gillian and Robyn were at his side.

Mr. Slovo's first wife Ruth first was killed in Mozambique in 1982 by a parcel bomb sent by South African agents during his 27-year exile for his fight against apartheid.

He said of the killing: "The way I've rationalised it is that the most effective punishment is to force those who did it to live in a democratic South Africa."

Mr. Mandela, 76, is seeing the old-guard of anti-apartheid fighters fade slowly from the scene.

ANC National Chairman Oliver Tambo died in April 1993, days after Communist Party Secretary-General Chris Hani was killed by right-wing whites in an assassination that shook the coun-

ty. ANC Deputy President Walter Sisulu stepped down from his post last month after witnessing black majority rule in the country's historic all-race elections last April.

Concern has been expressed over the health of Mr. Mandela, who underwent an eye operation last year. His spokesman Joel Netshizenze told Reuters Friday, Mr. Mandela was in good health and rested after a Christmas and New Year holiday break.

But he faces a punishing schedule, starting with a visit to India — the first country to impose sanctions against apartheid South Africa — late this month.

A one-time Stalinist and national chairman of the Communist Party of South Africa (SACP) at the time of his death, Mr. Slovo was seen during the apartheid era as "public enemy number one" by many right-wing whites brought up during the cold war to regard the Kremlin as the source of all evil.

He was born into a Jewish family in the Lithuanian village of Obelai in 1926. He came to South Africa at the age of nine as anti-semitism took hold in the Baltic area.

He studied law at Johannesburg's University of the Witwatersrand, where he first met Mr. Mandela, with whom he had "terrible rows" over the merits of communism which Mr. Mandela opposed.

He also became in 1985 the first white member of the National Executive of the ANC, to which the SACP was allied, and was chief of staff of the ANC's military wing Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

A burly man with a shock of white hair before cancer took its toll, he returned to South Africa in 1990 after then president F.W. de Klerk legalised the ANC and the SACP. Mr. Slovo had joined at the age of 16.

He became housing minister in Mr. Mandela's government of national unity after the ANC won a sweeping victory in the April elections.

The portfolio is an important one in a government seeking to redress the inequities of apartheid, and Mr. Slovo had pledged decent housing for all South Africans.

Doctors earlier this week advised him to rest, but he continued to work to the end, holding daily meetings with his director-general Billy Cobbett and members of his staff. Mr. Cobbett said it was still "far too early" to name his successor.

The National Party, which institutionalised racial segregation after coming to power in 1948 and fought bitterly for white supremacy until Mr. De Klerk announced in 1990 an end to apartheid, said it had developed a "healthy respect" for Mr. Slovo.

"Although Mr. Slovo was a political opponent, and there was no secret regarding our political difference," said party spokesman Matthys Van Schalkwyk.

"Since his appointment as minister, he played a very constructive role in government," Mr. Van Schalkwyk said. He described Mr. Slovo's death as "a great loss to the people of this country" who had dedicated his life to the "liberation of the oppressed".

Rare mammal species eaten by Vietnamese

HANOI (AFP) — A discovery of a rare new mammal species in central Vietnam has gone disastrously wrong after a calf taken from its mother was eaten by villagers before genetic tests could be carried out, a report said Friday. A pair of animals, members of what is believed to be the third new mammal species found in a wild and isolated area of central Vietnam in recent years, were found in December by a group of hunters, the Vietnam News reported. One of the animals, a small deer-like breed from the same family of species as oxen, escaped but a calf was captured. However, the animal, known locally as "tuo", died of fear after a few days in captivity and was eaten by the hunters, the newspaper said. Last year two rare oxen of a species known as the Sao La died after only a few months in captivity in Hanoi, having caused a stir as one of only a handful of new mammals to be discovered this century. David Hulse, head of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Vietnam, called the discovery at the time the "biological equivalent of discovering a new planet." Officials of the WWF have urged authorities not to take samples that could be used for DNA testing and then release them into the wild. Professor Ha Dinh Duc of Hanoi University said he was confident that the two found in Thua Thien-Hue province were a new species as photographs showed it to be significantly different from other bovid species found in Vietnam. A third species known as the Giant Muntjac has been determined from bones but no live example has been seen by scientists investigating the wilds of central Vietnam.

Baby for kidnapper of Abbie

LONDON (AFP) — The woman wanted a child so much that she snatched newborn baby Abbie Humphries, triggering a nationwide hunt last July, has herself given birth to a daughter, her family said Thursday. Former doctor nurse Julie Kelley, who was given three years' probation last month for abducting Abbie, was Thursday recovering with her nine-pound (four kilogramme) baby at a secret address. Ms. Kelley, 22, took Abbie from a ward at the Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, central England, last July. Abbie was recovered just over two weeks later at Ms. Kelley's home, not far from the hospital. Ms. Kelley's daughter was born in hospital Tuesday by Caesarean section. She was five days overdue and the labour lasted for 28 hours. Her parents said she was "exhausted but elated" after giving birth. Although Ms. Kelley was already pregnant when she snatched Abbie, it is thought she was using the baby to try to hold on to her boy friend Leigh Gilbert, a 23-year-old motor mechanic. The couple have since separated, but Mr. Gilbert has told friends that he is delighted about the birth and wants to play a role in his daughter's upbringing. Ms. Kelley will have to undergo psychotherapeutic treatment at a special hospital as part of the terms of her probation.

U.S. lawmaker introduces caning bill

JACKSON, Mississippi (R) — A U.S. lawmaker from the southern state of Mississippi has introduced a bill that would allow state judges to include Singapore-style caning as part of the sentencing for any crime. Although the bill's author, state Representative Tom Cameron of Greenville, admitted that the practice would be viewed by many as inhumane, he argues that society would be better off if state punishment forced people to think twice before committing criminal acts. "I say we need to shift the cruel and inhumane treatment from the victims to the criminals," said Mr. Cameron, a Republican who introduced the measure earlier this week. "If we can't find room for them in prison, we need to do something. I think caning will scare a lot of people and maybe they'll think twice before they commit crimes here." The measure, which could come up for discussion in committee within days, does not specify whether convicted criminals should be caned in public or private or where on their bodies they should receive the blows.

EU reveals organisational overhaul

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union, seeking to sharpen its voice as an economic superpower, has revealed the organisational overhaul it hopes will make its message clearer.

Instead of appointing policy chiefs the new formula for foreign policy is to divide up the globe on a geographical basis among four commissioners with incoming EU chief Jacques Santer presiding over the group as a whole.

The men in the four new posts are appearing before the European Parliament to lay out their wares at ratification hearings this week and next, ahead of officially taking up their jobs on Jan. 23. But it's a safe bet that the revamped approach of the EU's new Executive Commission will not produce someone who becomes known the world over as the voice of European foreign policy.

One Eurocrat, wistfully pondering such a prospect, recently recalled Henry Kissinger once saying he didn't consult Europe more often because he didn't know its phone number. Under the outgoing commission of President Jacques

Delors, different commissioners dealt with political and economic relations respectively with the same non-EU countries.

The new set-up under president-designate Jacques Santer aims to avoid the spectacle of foreign governments having to entertain more than one commissioner to get basic business done.

"It is as likely to work as the previous one," Trade Commissioner Sir Leon Brittan said cryptically when asked how he rated the new system at a European Parliament confirmation hearing Thursday.

The British commissioner, who lost his cherished responsibility for Eastern Europe in the portfolio reshuffle, is in charge of relations with the United States, Japan and other developed countries plus China.

He ranged confidently over these areas at Thursday's hearing, warning Japan to open up markets, urging efforts to ward off U.S. isolationism and telling China to obey basic trade rules if it wanted to join the world trade organisation.

Dutchman Hans Van Den Broek becomes responsible for East Europe, including

the next countries to join the EU, and the former Soviet Union as well as the common foreign and security policy provided for under the Maastricht Treaty.

Spain's Manuel Marin will take over dealings with Latin America, the Mediterranean, Middle East and developing Asian countries while Portugal's Joao De Deus Pinheiro gets African, Caribbean and Pacific developing countries and South Africa.

In parliamentary hearings so far the commissioners with foreign portfolios have managed to avoid any seriously crossed wires.

However, Mr. Marin raised some eyebrows Wednesday with a categorical statement that Turkey would one day join the EU, a subject EU politicians often prefer to be vague about and which falls under Mr. Van Den Broek's responsibility.

Even if the foreign portfolio holders in the new commission manage to work closely together, their impact on the international stage will be circumscribed by the dominance of European national governments in most foreign policy areas.

Malawi leader condemns anti-banda violence

BLANTYRE, Malawi (R) — Malawi's President Bakili Muluzi upbraided his supporters for attacking opposition offices following accusations of murder against former President Kamuzu Banda and his closest aide.

Government supporters attacked offices of Mr. Banda's Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in Blantyre and Lilongwe after cabinet ministers said Thursday the ex-president and his closest associate John Tembo faced murder charges for the 1983 killings of four politicians.

"I condemn without reservation these acts of wanton destruction," said Mr. Muluzi, who ousted Mr. Banda after 30 years of autocratic rule in the country's first multi-party elections last May.

"This is the kind of behaviour which we should not accept or condone in the new Malawi," he said.

MCP spokesman Dr. Heatherwick Ntumba told Reuters he believed the attacks were planned in advance. He said the MCP had restrained its own supporters otherwise there would have been "a very violent blood bath."

Diplomats said violence was possible in a country which split along ethnic lines during the elections that brought Mr. Muluzi and his United Democratic Front to power.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Chastened by experiences in Bosnia and Somalia, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has scaled down his expectations of peacekeeping operations and at the same time asked member states for more support.

He said the United Nations was not in a position at this time to field troops with a mandate to use military force, suffered from lack of resources and lack of a unified command.

"Enforcement action at present is beyond the capacity of the United Nations except on a very limited scale," he said. "It would be folly to attempt to alter this reality at the present time."

But even some of his modest proposals were immediately trounced by President Bill Clinton's administration, in an apparent reaction to the new Republican Congress which is scathing in its criticism of the United Nations.

In a position paper that will serve as the basis for Security Council discussions, Dr. Ghali Thursday traced the explosive growth of 17 peacekeeping operations that included not only troop contingents, but programmes for refugees, elections, food aid, and nation-building.

He revived ideas for a U.N. rapid deployment force to help in peacekeeping emergencies. This would consist of battalions stationed in

McCurry gets White House press post

WASHINGTON (USIA) — President Bill Clinton told reporters State Department spokesman Mike McCurry will become White House press secretary after a short transition period.

Mr. McCurry said he will start his new duties Friday, attending senior staff meetings and splitting his time between White House and State. He said he will not begin briefing at the White House until he is up to speed on all aspects of administration policy.

"He has done a very fine job," Mr. Clinton said of Mr. McCurry, "representing our administration at the Department of State. He has dealt with a wide range of very sensitive, complicated and very difficult issues, and he's done it very well."

Mr. McCurry will become assistant to the president and press secretary.

The White House chief of staff, Leon Panetta, told reporters Mr. McCurry "will be fully briefed" and have "full access to all meetings."

He said Mr. Clinton is looking to Mr. McCurry for the "same kind of excellent performance" he demonstrated at State.

Mr. McCurry said Mr. Clinton had given him "the tools to do this job and do it well," a reference to allegations that his predecessor, Dee Dee Myers, was denied those tools for most of her tenure.

Ghali scales down U.N. peacekeeping ambitions

per cent of the regular U.N. budget and more than 30 per cent of peacekeeping. But the United Nations is also financed by Western European nations and Japan, which pay promptly and make up more than 50 per cent of the budget.

The Europeans also field the most troops, particularly in Bosnia, and do not get compensation until years later.

"On top of that we now have to get approval for everything from Bob Dole," said one State senior Security Council envoy.

Dr. Ghali's new paper was a follow-up to his 1992 "agenda for peace," a landmark blueprint for a larger U.N. role in peacekeeping in the post cold war era. At that time, he recommended a permanent armed force to deter aggression and enforce peace, including posting troops inside frontiers of countries threatened by their neighbours.

There are now more than 70,000 troops in 37 peacekeeping missions at a cost of \$3 billion annually. The largest numbers are in the Balkans and in Somalia, from which the United Nations will withdraw by the end of March.

Told of Ms. Albright's comments, Dr. Ghali was visibly surprised, saying: "I'm astonished because the paper was distributed just one hour ago and it is a long paper."

Asked about Sen. Dole's proposals, he said he would send emissaries to Washington and try to talk to key legislators.

"But if we are not successful, we just have to adapt and try to find logistical support from other member countries of the United Nations," he said.

Ms. Albright criticised the proposal to set up a U.N. rapid deployment force as impractical.

"Each situation is different and we are afraid that if there were such a force, it would never be tailored quite right and also that it would not be in use all the time," Ms. Albright said.

Stressing that "unity of command is an important principle" for successful peacekeeping operations, the U.N. chief alluded to the Somalia fiasco, saying that governments who provide troops should not give direct orders to their contingents on operational matters.

"Ms. Albright said Dr. Ghali was 'a little off the mark' in assessing blame."

"We have to guard against saying everytime there is a success it is due to the U.N. and everytime there is a failure it is due to the member states," she added.

"We have to look very carefully at the suggestions made by the secretary general... we don't think that his approach is the only one to take," Ms. Albright added.

China lauds air safety despite crashes

BEIJING (R) — In a glittering ceremony in the Great Hall of the People, China awarded medals Friday to the crew of its international carrier for 40 years of accident-free flights, ignoring a dismal domestic air safety record.

Top Communist Party leaders graced the awards and hundreds of beaming flight attendants in sky-blue uniforms joined an audience of hundreds of schoolchildren in the cavernous hall as the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) congratulated itself and its crew.

As the international team received the accolades, it was unclear if a separate crew department had supplied the pilots for about a dozen planes that have crashed on domestic flights in China in the past few years.

An official refused to comment on Air China's achievements or its difficulties, underlining the secrecy with which CAAC has traditionally surrounded its activities,

even trying to suppress information on crashes unless foreigners are involved.

After the national anthem, Vice Premier Zou Jiahua and other officials presented two golden chalices and several plaques to model pilots, navigators, radio operators and a captain, all named "national flight safety pace-setters in the civil aviation industry."

"All should study their example and learn from their attitude and experience," Zhang Zuojin, vice-minister of labour, told the audience of 3,000. "Security is a priority."

His assessment was nothing if not timely.

In February last year, the International Airline Passenger Association cited China as one of the most dangerous places in the world to fly, after three domestic airlines crashed, killing 76 people, and 10 aircraft were hijacked to Taiwan in 1993.

The year before, 276 peo-

ple were killed in five crashes over just four months, accounting for one-fifth of total world fatalities in 1992 and making China's air corridors among the riskiest in the world.

However, all those airlines were domestic companies hired off from CAAC as part of sweeping reform of China's aviation industry in the past few years.

Friday's ceremony was clearly intended to distinguish the department that supplies the crew for Air China, the international carrier that flies 60 domestic and 70 foreign routes, while glossing over the less illustrious record of domestic airlines.

In the past 40 years, the crew department has trained 708 pilots, landed at 200 airports in 100 countries and flown 1.3 million hours, Mr. Zhang said.

The department was set up on Jan. 1, 1955, as the flying team of the Beijing division of the CAAC.



Chechen volunteers fight Russian soldiers for the control of Grozny. President Boris Yeltsin announced that special forces are on their way to reinforce Russian contingent in the

break-away Republic of Chechnya after a failed assault on the town by tanks and light armoured vehicles (AFP photo)

Chechnya crisis could threaten CFE treaty

LONDON (Agencies) — The crisis over Chechnya could threaten a landmark European arms treaty and has provoked fresh Russian appeals that the agreement should be changed to reflect Moscow's concerns about the troubled Caucasus, diplomats say.

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, signed in 1990 by members of NATO and the now-defunct Warsaw Pact, provides for the biggest cuts in arms control history in tanks, armoured vehicles and other equipment.

Despite the end of the cold war, the agreement was widely seen as a cornerstone of security on the continent. But it has already run into trouble. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant the treaty's provisions were delayed and Russia has complained for almost two years about limits on equipment deployment, which must be met by November.

Russia says limits on its southern flank are too strict given problems in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh and now Chechnya.

Western allies and Mos-

cow's former satellites in Eastern Europe have refused to change the treaty, drawing a threat from Russia to quit the pact altogether early last year.

With broader economic and political relations between the West and Russia now threatened by the Chechnya crisis and Moscow already at odds with NATO over expansion into Eastern Europe, the treaty could be in serious trouble, diplomats say.

"The Russians have moved a lot of equipment down into Chechnya and they are well in excess of what the treaty permits," said one diplomat who asked not to be identified.

"They say the fighting has justified their earlier appeals to revise the whole thing," he said.

Diplomats say it now looks increasingly unlikely that Russia will meet the November deadline to comply with the limits.

"They were already over the top before Chechnya and if they don't meet the deadline, they will be in violation. That would be se-

rious," said another diplomat.

Senior NATO officials are due to meet in Brussels next Wednesday for a regular meeting to review progress on implementing the treaty. Diplomats said the problems caused by Chechnya were bound to come up and that the issue had already been raised with Moscow.

"What they (the Russians) said to us was that they had moved equipment down there but that some of it had been destroyed anyway, in the fighting around Grozny," said one diplomat.

Diplomats said it was not clear exactly how much equipment had been moved to Chechnya. The CFE treaty covers only military hardware, not troop deployments.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has already appealed to the West to agree changes to the pact, arguing that it reflects the old East-West divide rather than current realities.

Diplomats said Russia had also failed to notify other European states of its troop movements into Chechnya, under the terms of a Vienna agreement designed to prom-

ote security by giving full information on military deployments.

Russian diplomats said these confidence and security-building measures were valid only in peacetime and that Moscow was effectively at war with the break-away region.

Meanwhile, President Yeltsin's gamble on winning a quick victory in Chechnya could have disastrous consequences and cost him the much-needed backing of the armed forces, analysts in Moscow said.

"The military understand that once again they have been used as a political tool, and were sent in to Chechnya simply to improve Yeltsin's plummeting popularity ratings," said Alexander Kononov, director of the Russian Academy of Science's Military Policy Centre.

The Kremlin's mixing of politics and armed force in the intervention in the break-away Caucasus republic has turned out to be a disaster and an undertaking for which the Russian army conspicuously lacks any enthusiasm.

U.N. seeks more troops for Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations has asked for another 6,000 peacekeeping troops to monitor the latest ceasefire in Bosnia, a U.N. spokesman said Friday as officials struggled to cement the truce.

Diplomats from the international "contact group" on Bosnia agreed a strategy for advancing the peace process at a meeting in Bonn and were presenting it to their governments for approval, a diplomatic source said.

The contact group officials — from the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany — did not disclose details but agreed to meet again in Paris Tuesday.

The four-month cessation of hostilities signed Dec. 31 calls for the deployment of United Nations troops between rival Serb and Bosnian government forces.

"We need more troops to monitor the ceasefire in Bosnia," the spokesman told Reuters in Zagreb. "A request has been made for another 6,000 troops to be sent in."

Countries already providing troops for the U.N. Pro-

tection Forces in Bosnia had been asked to send more.

There are currently around 23,000 United Nations troops in Bosnia, but U.N. commanders in the field say this is not enough to monitor hundreds of kilometres of front lines.

Fighting has generally subsided in Bosnia since the cessation of hostilities agreement was agreed, with the exception of the northwestern Bihać enclave, where rebel Serbs and Muslims have not signed the pact.

The Bosnian Serbs, however, announced that they were with effect from Saturday revoking a "state of war" they declared late last year in response to an offensive by the Muslim-led Bosnia government army.

The statement by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic appeared to indicate that he was ready to abide by the ceasefire, which the Serb leadership hopes will effectively freeze the territory it holds.

The statement however made clear that a high state of combat readiness would still be maintained in the 70 per cent of the former Yugosl-

lav republic controlled by the Serbs.

The United Nations, which has been trying to tie down details of the ceasefire in a series of meetings between rival military commanders, said a session of the Sarajevo Joint Commission on implementing the ceasefire scheduled for Thursday was cancelled after the Bosnian Serbs refused to show up.

The Serbs were protesting at the Bosnian government's failure to withdraw all troops from a demilitarised zone on Mount Igman just outside the city by a Wednesday deadline.

"This was a certain setback in facilitating the process of cessation of hostilities. But we must remember that this peace process will be a painful one. The parties still enormously mistrust each other," U.N. spokesman Alex Ivankov said.

Mr. Ivankov said both sides agreed to attend another Joint Commission meeting at Sarajevo Airport Friday.

The U.N. sent out more ground patrols in the morning to check whether Bosnian

government troops had completed their pullout from the demilitarised zone. But three lookout posts were still occupied by government soldiers as of Friday morning.

A U.N. helicopter reconnaissance of the zone with Bosnian Muslim and Serb officers aboard was planned for Friday.

Mr. Ivankov said the U.N. hoped the Bosnian Serbs would reopen civilian supply roads to Sarajevo Friday or Saturday as a gesture of goodwill on the Serbs' Christmas weekend.

The U.N. reported just nine ceasefire violations throughout Bosnia in the past 24 hours — seven by the Serbs, one by government troops and one incident involving both sides.

There was fighting east of the Bangladeshi U.N. compound in the town of Velika Kladusa in the Bihać enclave.

A United Nations resupply convoy reached the Bihać enclave on Thursday night, just after peacekeepers there had run out of fuel as a result of blockade by rebel militiamen and virtually halted all activity.

France's Barre bides time; left split on Jospin

PARIS (R) — Former Prime Minister Raymond Barre kept France guessing on Friday over whether he would enter an increasingly crowded presidential race and an offer by former Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin to run split the left.

Mr. Barre, 70, an unaffiliated centrist, said in a radio interview he would take up to three months to decide whether to contest the two-round election on April 23 and May 7.

His public support for Mr. Barre has soared by about 15 percentage points since outgoing European Commission President Jacques Delors, a moderate Socialist, announced last month he would not run to succeed Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, who has been head of state for 14 years.

Commentators said Mr. Barre, a pro-European economist who was prime minister from 1976 to 1981 after serving on the European Commission, could take

votes from the conservative front-runner, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, as well as the centre-left.

Mr. Balladur is expected to announce his candidacy between Jan. 16 and 20 following a carefully orchestrated build-up of endorsements from cabinet members. Press reports say he has already rented a campaign headquarters.

Ten cabinet ministers have publicly endorsed Mr. Balladur this week, while only three have backed his most serious rival on the right, Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac.

Social Affairs Minister Simone Veille, the official number two in the cabinet, told reporters Friday: "I said a few weeks ago the prime minister would make a great president. I say today I hope he will announce his candidacy very soon."

Europe-1 Radio said at least 69 Gaullist parliamentarians would publish a call next week for Mr. Balladur to run in preference to Mr.

Chirac, their party's founder, who has already declared his candidacy but trails third in the polls.

Another right-wing contender, anti-Maastricht campaigners Philippe de Villiers, is expected to join the race next Sunday, and next extreme-right anti-immigration crusader Jean-Marie Le Pen has already announced his candidacy.

In a Europe-1 interview, Mr. Barre called for more energetic measures to cut employers' payroll taxes, improve job training and increase labour market flexibility to combat France's near-record 12.6 per cent unemployment rate.

He advocated a reform of France's tax system. At present almost half of the population pays no income tax at all while the top 10 per cent of taxpayers nearly 70 per cent of the total revenue collected.

Mr. Barre also called for further steps to make the justice system independent of

government interference, citing apparent efforts to slow or torpedo corruption probes.

The left, cast into disarray by Mr. Delors' shock withdrawal on Dec. 11, was further unsettled this week by Mr. Jospin's offer to stand for the Socialist Party.

Mr. Jospin's long-standing Socialist rival, ex-Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, implicitly disavowed his candidacy Friday, saying: "We must choose a person... capable of uniting all Socialists and the non-Socialist left."

"Lionel Jospin was the first to declare himself, even a little ahead of time. We must see now whether there are other contenders."

The small Radical Party, whose maverick businessman-turned-politician Bernard Tapie grabbed 12 per cent of the vote in last year's European Parliament elections, condemned Mr. Jospin in a statement as "exactly the opposite of what the left needs today."

Charles taunts media with another stolen kiss

LONDON (R) — Britain's Prince Charles has thumbed his nose at the country's racy tabloid press with another public kiss on the lips of a young female ski partner.

A front page photograph published by Britain's Today newspaper Friday showed the defiant heir to the throne embracing a blonde woman in the same spot at a Swiss ski resort where he kissed a young aide called Tiggy 24 hours earlier.

Pictures inside the paper revealed the recipient was 23-year-old Tessa Palmer-Tomkinson, daughter of close friends of the prince.

"It was clear the fun-loving prince was taking the mick (having a joke) with his fresh cluck on the snowy slopes of Switzerland," the paper said. The couple burst out

laughing in front of the cameras afterwards.

The revelation Wednesday of Prince Charles' first impulsive embrace of 29-year-old Tiggy Legge-Bourke — who looks after his two young sons — unleashed frenzied press speculation on their relationship and its effect on his estranged wife Princess Diana.

The trials and tribulations of Britain's troubled royal family grabbed headlines for the second day with surprisingly frank comments from the queen's retired private secretary, who labelled the oncast Duchess of York "vulgar, vulgar vulgar."

In an interview with the weekly Spectator magazine, Lord Charteris, Queen Elizabeth's top official for more of the 1970s, said Prince

Charles would divorce Princess Diana sooner rather than later and it was a pity the prince had had to marry a virgin.

Lord Charteris, still very close to the inner royal circle, also described the queen mother as a "hit of an ostrich."

But the visibly chastened 81-year-old former aide said Thursday his remarks had not been intended for publication.

"Those remarks were private... I said them off the record and I don't want to discuss it," he told British television.

The Duchess of York, dubbed "fergie" due to her maiden name Sara Ferguson, shrugged off his criticism of her.

"Everyone is entitled to

their own opinion," she told reporters on the slopes of Swiss resort Klosters — the same place where Prince Charles is skiing separately with his sons.

Some newspapers fronted news that the queen's 93-year-old aunt, Princess Alice — together with her son the Duke of Gloucester and his wife — would move out of their 16th century country manor because they could no longer afford it.

But the tabloid Daily Mirror poured scorn on the step, which appeared to be the latest cost-cutting measure by the royals.

"The Duke of Gloucester claims he is too broke to run his country home — despite getting £250,000 a year from the civil list," the newspaper said.

Sri Lankan president announces Jan. 8 war truce

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's president Friday hailed a truce with Tamil rebels due to start Sunday as "hopefully the dawn of a new era," after a 12-year war which has cost 30,000 lives.

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga said proposals for power-sharing in the north and the east, where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are fighting a Tamil homeland, would be put to the rebels soon.

Mrs. Kumaratunga, who is also finance minister, said peace would also yield an economic dividend. The war costs the government \$400 million a year.

"The fundamental obstacle to increased foreign invest-

ment is Sri Lanka's costly and prolonged ethnic conflict," she told the opening of a new parliamentary session.

The truce, the first since June 1990, was agreed between government and rebel representatives when they met for a second round of peace talks in rebel-controlled Jaffna town Tuesday.

The two sides also agreed on a 40-billion-rupee (\$816 million) rehabilitation plan for the north.

Military sources said the truce was likely to include the establishment of demilitarised zones and possibly a corridor for aircraft movement over the Jaffna peninsula in the north, the strong-

hold of the Tigers.

It would be monitored by a committee, including foreign representatives, probably from the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC has been exchanging letters between Mrs. Kumaratunga and rebel chief Velupillai Prabhakaran since the talks began.

Tuesday's meeting was the first since talks were suspended in late October after the killing by a suicide bomber of opposition presidential candidate Gamini Disanayake and 53 others. Some police officers blamed the Tigers, who denied involvement.

Mrs. Kumaratunga, whose People's Alliance won Au-

gust general elections partly on promises to make peace, was driven to parliament amid unprecedented security because of intelligence reports that Tiger suicide squads had infiltrated the capital.

Traffic along roads to parliament, lined by police and armed troops, was stopped until the presidential motorcade passed. More troops and police in boats patrolled the lake around Parliament House.

A ceasefire, accompanied by peace talks was in force from April 1989 to June 1990. It broke down through mutual mistrust and lack of progress towards a lasting solution.

Singapore hangs Hong Kong woman for drugs

SINGAPORE (R) — Relatives and friends mourned a young Hong Kong mother hanged in Singapore Friday for drug trafficking despite a stay of execution over Christmas and international pleas for mercy.

Angel Mou Pui-Peng, 25, an unmarried mother whose execution was postponed so she could spend Christmas with her family, was hanged in Changi Prison Friday morning.

She was cremated in the early evening at Mount Vernon Crematorium after a short service attended by her grief-stricken sister and close friends and well-wishers.

"Our sister Angel has now been taken to heaven... a place we will go and we shall

hope to see her there one day," an elderly pastor, speaking in Cantonese, told the congregation of some 25 people.

"When are you coming back to Hong Kong?" a young woman cried in Cantonese as she, Ms. Mou's sister Cecilia and a few others watched the coffin, covered in black velvet, disappear into the furnace.

Ms. Mou's father, who declined to speak to reporters, stayed outside in a white Salvation Army van parked behind the hall. The father, reportedly reconciled with his daughter during her brief stay of execution, broke down uncontrollably when he was joined outside by his daughter Cecilia after the crema-

tion. Ms. Mou was born in the Portuguese-administered territory of Macau and had a Portuguese passport but lived in Hong Kong. She was arrested at Changi Airport on Aug. 29, 1991, after arriving from Bangkok.

The Central Narcotics Bureau said a total of 20 packets containing 4.1 kg (nine lb) of heroin was found in her luggage.

Under Singapore law, the death sentence is mandatory for anyone over 18 convicted of trafficking in more than 15 grams (half an ounce) of heroin, 30 grams (one ounce) of morphine or 50 grams (18 oz) of cannabis.

Ms. Mou's lawyer Peter Yap told Reuters that Ms.

Mou was "normal and calm" when he saw her Thursday. He said she "was emotionally stable, prepared spiritually she was very strong."

He also said Ms. Mou was comforted by an eleven-hour settlement of guardianship for her nine-year-old son but did not disclose who the guardian would be.

Ms. Mou, the 95th person executed under Singapore's tough 1975 anti-drug laws, was sentenced to death in 1993. Her personal appeal for clemency was rejected.

Portuguese President Mario Soares and the Portuguese government also appealed for clemency on the grounds of Ms. Mou's youth and the fact that she was only a carrier.

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Challenge of new Cabinet

NO MATTER whom he chooses to join his government, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the man who led Jordan's administration twice in the Kingdom's past five crucial years, faces a formidable challenge and a historic legacy brought mainly by the signing last year of a peace treaty with Israel. Sharif Zeid's mandate appears focussed on three fronts: The peace process, relations with the Palestinian leadership and other Arab countries and the formidable task of political, economic and administrative reforms.

On the peace front Jordan needs to consolidate the peace and help achieve breakthroughs on other tracks, and it needs to take economic advantage of the new era.

The Jordanian leadership, in a warmer peace with Israel than Egypt's, is poised to play a greater role than that of Cairo mediating between the Israelis on the one side and the Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese on the other. If Jordan aspires to a greater and more secure regional role, it has to be forthcoming in formulating its own strategy pushing it forward. The notion that Jordan did not sign peace for economic reasons as well is not accurate. Jordan should win dividends of peace just like Egypt and Israel did when they signed their Camp David Accords in 1979. The Kingdom should make clear to Israel, the U.S. and Europe that for peace to hold anywhere in the region its effects must be felt by ordinary people, those who for decades paid the price of war and instability. Jordan did not only make peace to regain its rights, of which it has been deprived for decades, but also served every other party to the process in one way or the other. It provided Israel with peace with another Arab country than Egypt, it gave the Syrians a block upon which to build, the Americans another breakthrough and the rest of the Arabs an example to follow. More important, it added another block to the wall of stability in the Middle East, a stability that is very important for the interests of the U.S., Europe, the West and world peace in general.

On the front of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, an issue of vital importance to Jordan's sacred national unity, a great deal of misunderstanding and mistrust has developed over the past year. While we hope the Palestinian leadership would do its part to improve bilateral ties, we believe that the new government will be in a better position to contribute to a resumption of constructive dialogue and genuine cooperation with our brethren in Palestine. While we recognise the efforts of the Majali government towards Arab reconciliation a great deal of work lies ahead. The Arab League should be viewed as the best forum for such a move at the present stage.

But the local scene, where genuine change that will affect the future of the country, is certainly the most important. In this regard, reform is needed in three areas: Politics, the economy and government administration. In politics, a minimum level of national consensus is overdue. In this regard, it is most heartening to note that the Islamic Action Front is moving closer to the mainstream consensus. Also important is a new look and a fresh approach to the subject of national unity. The issue needs to be moved from being merely a slogan into practical application that would address the grievances of all and lead to an even split of power and social justice.

Economic problems are very obvious to all the concerned bodies and politicians. Their resolution, however, hinges on making a greater effort at real reforms including privatisation and deregulation. In this vein, the issue of administrative reform should be at the top of the government's list of priorities. For unless the government body that plans and executes policy is cleaned up and modernised all talk about other reform will be meaningless.

Perhaps the formation of Sharif Zeid's government will give the clue to where we are heading.

Jordanian Perspective

And the Jordanian march continues

By Dr. Musa Keilani

A GREEK MARATHON — that is the best way to describe the change of governments in Jordan since it is abundantly clear that every new head of government is taking the torch from his predecessor and running that extra mile in the course of the country's advance.

The resignation of Prime Minister, Abdul Salam Majali and His Majesty King Hussein's choice of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker as the head of the new government were not exactly a surprise or shock. I might even venture to say that when Dr. Majali was appointed prime minister on May 29, 1993, the course Jordan was following and had to follow was spelt out very distinctly. The country needed someone like Dr. Majali to take resolute steps and run that extra mile towards making peace with Israel.

Indeed, Dr. Majali successfully leaped that extra mile as we all witnessed when Israel and Jordan signed their historic peace treaty on Oct. 26, but it is naive to suggest that Dr. Majali's resignation came as a response to mounting criticism from Parliament and political parties and worsening relations between the executive authority and legislature as a result of his government's political and economic policies.

For practical and technical purposes, the Majali government was mandated with certain specific tasks, starting with amending the Election Law, introducing economic reforms, and of course making peace with Israel among other things. No government headed by a politician with hopes for a political career would have undertaken to perform these tasks if only because of the minefields that surrounded the course to these goals (remember why the government had to wait more than one year before introducing the sales tax law in June 1994). More than a dozen members of the cabinet who had parliamentary aspirations waged a strong campaign to put off introducing the controversial levy as long as they were in office, obviously with an eye at their chances of election/re-election in the November 1993 polls. But it was some of the former cabinet members who did enter Parliament who were the strongest proponents of the levy when the issue was debated in the House.

But Dr. Majali was courageous enough not only to shoulder the responsibilities that carried risks but also to ensure that the responsibilities were successfully served and the national goals were achieved despite the brickbats that greeted him along the way. The bouquet of peace was the best reward for him in the end. The country and its people owe a lot to him.

It is easy to rule that the policies and practices of the Majali government were highly unpopular. But then, it is

no secret that any government implementing controversial but inevitable self-reliance-oriented economic and social reforms and introducing unpopular fiscal measures — the sales tax law for instance — in a society long used to state sponsorship would have been castigated whether in Jordan or anywhere else. The Majali cabinet was no exception. If anything, the government that succeeds the Majali cabinet should be reaping the benefits of the policies and measures adopted and implemented by its predecessor. Indeed there may be a few problems here and there, but then those are the inevitable legacy when governments change.

That does not mean, however, Sharif Zeid's task is any easier. The former commander-in-chief of the army who successfully led two governments since 1989 will shoulder the responsibility of streamlining the internal affairs of the country inasmuch as he also needs to advance Jordan's quest to bring about a better balance in inter-Arab relationships.

For one thing, any new government in Jordan at this point in history faces the task of tackling the high unemployment in the country. Any successful solution to this problem lies only through fundamental changes in the mindset of the people and the antiquated value system of our society. The recent national census has brought out some of the ridiculous but true features of the problem: for one thing, it found that there are 288,000 foreign workers in the country while an equal number of Jordanians remain unemployed. Among the 288,000 are 54,000 Sri Lankan domestic help, a figure that is totally unjustifiable, given the size of the Jordanian society and the average family income.

Take for instance, the finding that 107,000 families live under the poverty line with a monthly income of less than JD 120 and 32,000 of those families live in absolute poverty with a monthly income of less than JD 60, with many of their members unemployed. How do we solve this problem except through bringing about sweeping changes in the thinking of the people, given the high number of foreign workers in the country that indicates available employment opportunities? Jordanians will have to understand and appreciate the dignity of labour, whether in farms or in petrol stations, rather than living in a superficial state of mind boosted by a false sense of social superiority. Our information media have to play a major role in bringing about that change, but the government has to begin the initiative.

Despite the immense efforts exerted by His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the mindset of our bureaucrats remains little

changed towards accepting the inevitability of dramatic changes in approach if Jordan were to reap the dividends of peace through attracting investments. This is also an area that the Sharif Zeid government would have to tackle by taking the bull by the horns. The present stage in our lives is too precious and important to be governed by sensitivities that prompt government leaders to balk at injecting young blood into our bureaucracy to replace many civil servants who serve little purpose other than being heavy paperweights in their offices.

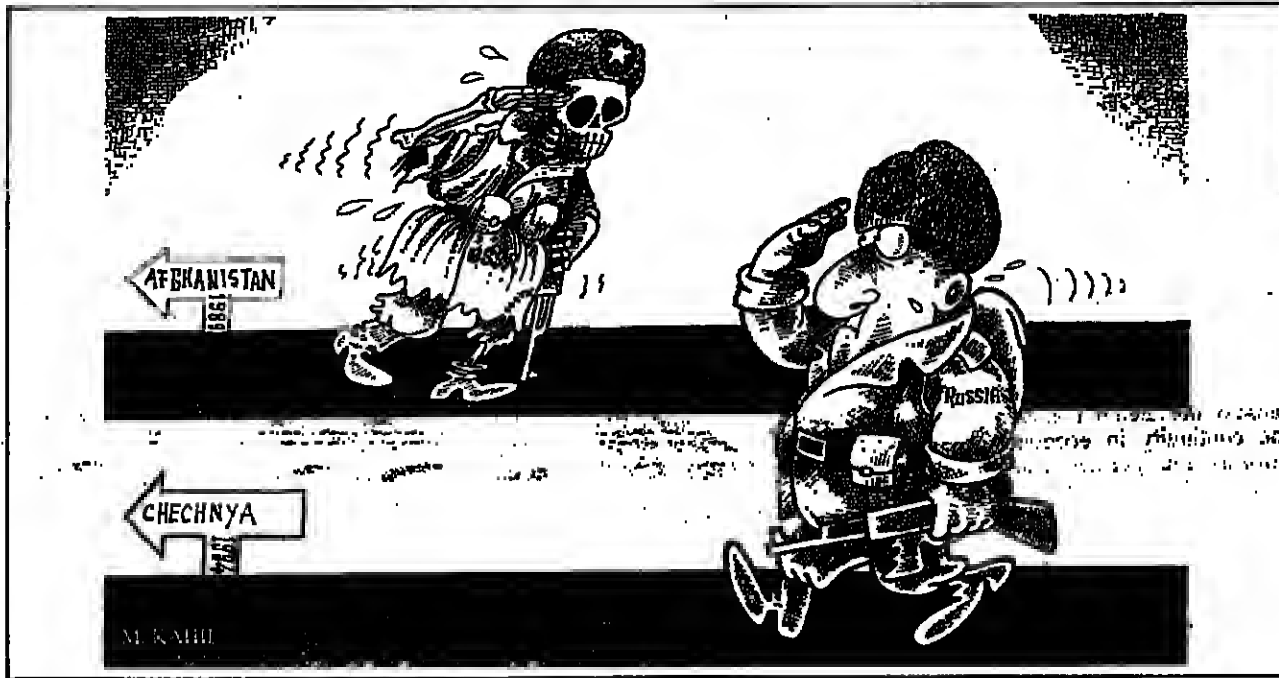
Improving relations between the executive and legislature is another task cut out for the Sharif Zeid government. But, given the high respect and clean record of Sharif Zeid and the popularity the prime-minister-designate enjoys among the people and political leaders, this should not be a major problem; if anything, the change in relationship could be automatic as much as it would be a result of a concerted effort.

The same applies to a large extent to Jordan's relations with the Arab World. Take for instance, the "quiet" nature of Amman-Damascus ties. Little improvement could be expected in this context as long as Syria did not actually make peace with Israel, and once it did then the way for Jordanian-Syrian relations is automatically opened. Any shifts in the present coolness in ties would fall short of the desired level of warmth until such time a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement is thrashed out.

As to the Gulf states, it is only a matter of time before the so-called isolation of Jordan is completely ended. We have made major achievements in improving our ties with several Gulf states, and those which are still cool to our goodwill gestures and sincere wish to see a better atmosphere prevail in the Arab World would find out for themselves the folly in their approach.

But that does not imply that our government should sit back and relax, waiting for things to happen. It has to maintain its efforts for pan-Arab unity and solidarity and improved relations with all members of the one Arab family but not at the expense of our national interests and principles cherished so much by our leadership and people. History has taught us that sacrificing our national interests and priorities for the sake of Arab interests and priorities is not appreciated and we end up the losers.

In sum, Sharif Zeid takes over the helm of our government at another major juncture in our history, and, hopefully, he would easily run his part of that extra mile in the great Jordanian marathon, holding aloft the torch of our march.



New government to face host of domestic issues

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

PROSPECTS of a new government, domestic issues, the situation in Chechnya, the situation in the Arab occupied lands and other topics attracted columnists and editorial writers of the local press in the past week.

While the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali busied itself with the peace treaty with Israel, the new government is bound to face a very huge task in dealing with domestic issues said Al Dustour daily. Majali did his best and served his country with honour at a very critical stage achieving for Jordan a very vital objective but the new government would be facing no lesser mission mainly at the domestic level which abounds with chronic problems said the paper.

This view was echoed by Mohammad Daoud, a columnist for Al Dustour, who expressed the opinion that domestic issues pose a serious challenge to the new government. We cannot remain impassive and waiting for matters to improve as a result of the peace treaty but we ought to embark immediately on measures to improve the internal situation, said the writer. Among the main issues facing the government he added was the rising cost of living, unemployment and poverty, he said.

Mahmoud Rimawi took another view expressing hope that the new government would give priority to improving Jordan's relations with the other Arab states. What we need, said the writer, is to improve the Jordanian-Palestinian relations as a first step and reassert Jordan's role in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people. He said that Jordan should seek an Arab summit so as to revive pan-Arab solidar-

ity which is needed to back just Arab causes.

A writer in Al Ra'i said that the municipal and other concerned authorities ought to find a solution to the problem of the Samir Rifai School for Girls in downtown Amman because its main gates open on a busy main street. The fast moving cars along that street have been responsible for many accidents with girl students being the victim, said Nazih, a columnist for Al Ra'i. The writer said that the location of that school was an error from the start but at least the concerned authorities can do something to rectify the situation by opening gates for the safe access and exit of the school. Especially during rush hours.

Jordanians are following

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Tareq Masarweh a writer for Al Ra'i criticised the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources for inviting fuel truck owners to bid for the lowest rates for transporting crude oil from Iraq to the refinery in Zarqa. The writer said that the ministry has not consulted the Transport Ministry which concerns itself with the question of axial weights and the damage to the roads in Jordan. Competing fuel truck owners will of course offer rates favourable to the Energy Ministry but will not take into account the amounts of fuel which their trucks carry, he said. Noting that the Energy Ministry is offering JD 7.25 for a tonne of transported crude down from JD 16.85. He said the move would tempt the truck owners to load their vehicles with as many tonnes of fuel as possible to get higher prices regardless of

the extra weight which is bound to harm the roads. A writer for Al Ra'i compared Russian President Boris Yeltsin with Stalin trying to revive the Russian empire by subduing the Chechen people by force. Bassam Emoush, an Islamist member of Parliament, said Yeltsin had not learnt from the lessons of the past when the Russian scabs were unsuccessful in subjugating the Chechen people. The Russians have not learnt from the lessons of their defeat in Afghanistan where they met stiff resistance and had to withdraw from that country, added Emoush. He said that the Arab had Islamic countries have a duty to support their brethren in Chechnya now facing the Russian aggression.

Sultan Al Hattab said that Israel can achieve no real peace with any Arab state without first making peace with the Palestinians. The Al Ra'i columnist said that the Rabin government's persistence on building the settlements reflects the intention of killing all chances of peace first with the Palestinians and second with the rest of the Arab World. The signing of treaties does not mean that peace has been accomplished and the weakness of Arabs in confronting Israel's arrogance is not bound to last for ever, warned the writer. The shortest way to reach peace with the Arab World is through the genuine and just peace with the Palestinians, concluded the writer.

Al Dustour said that Israel's attempts to expand its settlements near Bethlehem by force is part of the Israeli government's ceaseless effort to evict the Palestinians from their homeland. Peace and the Jewish settlement can never coexist and there can be no alternative to removing the settlements so that peace can be achieved, added the paper. Without respecting the rights of the Palestinians, warned the paper, Israel can never dream of having peace or normalisation of relations with the rest of the Arab states.

U.S.-Algerian connection under new scrutiny

By Joseph Fitchett

PARIS — The international fallout from the hijacking of an Air France jet will include fresh scrutiny of a U.S. connection with Algeria's Islamic fundamentalist opposition — a largely symbolic foothold established in Washington by human-rights groups and a few political exiles to gain visibility for their cause. For months, France has been irritated by U.S. doubts about the policies of Algeria's military government and calls for dialogue with the Muslim-led opposition.

The threat of a fundamentalist takeover in Algeria is France's deepest foreign policy worry, and French officials publicly insinuate that Washington has been heedlessly helping the radicals. In private, French officials frequently make the point that no American has been killed by terrorists in Algeria who have murdered 25 Frenchmen and a number of foreigners from several other countries. The implication is that Islamic fundamentalists have some special U.S. tie, a charge rejected by U.S. officials. They say the small number of Americans in Algeria explains the absence of casualties.

The French government, anxious to avoid an Islamic takeover in Algeria before elections in France in the spring, has resisted any dialogue with the Muslim groups and sought instead to bolster the Algerian government.

French officials have complained publicly about the unwillingness of the United States and Germany to provide more financial support to Algeria and their readiness to give political asylum to opposition leaders.

The emotional force of French concern, however, seems more to do with history, specifically the growth of U.S. importance in Algeria after the war of independence with France. While largely unofficial, American aid to Algerian revolutionaries who won independence still rankles in France, which has a traditional postcolonial interest in Algeria and the rest of North Africa.

U.S. anti-colonialism in the 1950s and '60s was aimed primarily at preempting Soviet influence. But independent Algeria expanded its U.S. political and economic ties, especially in the oil business, in a way that is rare among former French colonies. Current French suspi-

cions about U.S. intentions offer an eerie echo of those earlier fears of a U.S. desire to supplant French interests in Algeria.

This friction may now ease, officials say, because Western governments will have to take a harder look at the options in Algeria.

Clinton administration officials repeated their view recently that Paris should attempt to find and nurture a Muslim-led moderate front and, in any case, press the Algerian government to offer a calendar for elections.

In the U.S. view, the Algerian military regime's repressive approach — confirmed by a scorched-earth policy applied in the countryside in recent months in which killing has been widespread — has strengthened, not weakened, the resistance.

American officials predicted that there would be greater French interest in contacts with the main opposition group, the Islamic Salvation Front, as an alternative to extremists who are gaining control of the hardline military and to the Muslim terrorist underground.

The Air France hijackers, despite an initial demand for the release of imprisoned Islamic Front leaders, appear to have belonged to the Armed Islamic Group.

The movement is considered to be the most radical and dangerous of Algeria's Muslim fundamentalist groups. It is an umbrella name for several cells that have sprung up as repression has grown.

Dialogue with the Islamic Front, not repression, has been urged by the United States. But France dismissed the idea as a naive notion that would send Algeria the way of Iran and Sudan, which have Islamic governments.

Before the hijacking, however, there were signs in Paris of movement in that direction during talks in the fall between the State Department's top Arab expert and French Foreign Ministry officials. Since then, Washington has managed to curb anti-French comments by Algerian opposition figures who have sought political asylum.

And the Clinton administration has accepted French calls for the West to promote other Algerian political factions in order to prevent an Islamic takeover that could destabilise neighbouring countries in North Africa.

International Herald Tribune

Sharif Zeid in cabinet consultations

(Continued from page 1)

Other expected ministers are: Bassel Jarrah, Ibrahim Izzeddin, Kamel Al Ajlouni, and Ahmad Huleyayel. In a letter accepting Dr. Majali's resignation the King praised his efforts over the 18 months of his tenure in serving the country at a time

when the Kingdom was facing huge challenges and pressures.

Dr. Majali, in his resignation letter to the King, said his government was stepping down to open the way for a new government that would assume the responsibility of dealing with the challenges ahead.

The outgoing prime minister, in an interview with the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Network (MBC), denied that the reasons for the change in government was his team's failure to contain the opposition and focus sufficient attention on improving relations with the Arab World.

Parliament blocs confident of role

(Continued from page 1)

are trying to put their relations back on track with the establishment have started to appear lately and that is expected to make Sharif Zeid's effort to bring about reconciliation with the opposition bear fruit.

The other large though less coherent bloc in the House is the National Action Front (NAF), which includes 18 deputies. Sharif Zeid is not expected to have a hard time winning the confidence of this bloc though it is expected to make some demands on the portfolios if they are to join the government due to its strong relations with the outgoing cabinet of Dr. Majali.

"We took part in cabinets at the hardest of times and we are willing to participate in the new government provided that we have real and active participation," Chairman of the Bloc Abdul Baqi Jammo told the Jordan Times.

The 10-member National Democratic Coalition has warmly welcomed the appointment of Sharif Zeid

as prime minister-designate and are hopeful for a productive relationship with the new government.

Sharif Zeid can count on the support of the coalition which includes many parliamentary heavyweights of whom he has worked with Sharif Zeid before and enjoy good relationship with him. The bloc includes Hamdan Abu Jamous, Abdul Karim Kabariti, Saleh Irshadat and Saad Hayel Sraor.

Sharif Zeid is expected to have any easy time winning the support of the Jordanian National Bloc, which includes nine parliamentarians who follow centrist policies that are traditionally pro-establishment.

Awad Khleifat, an independent deputy who had served in the two previous governments of Sharif Zeid, was confident that the prime minister-designate will consult with all parliamentary blocs and win their support before forming the government.

"Sharif Zeid is a democrat who respects deputies and the legislative authority.

It is his nature to consult deputies," said Dr. Khleifat, who is among 17 lawmakers who are trying to form a bloc that would include Taber Al Masri, former prime minister and House speaker Ali Abu Al Ragheb, Samir Habashneh, and Mohammad Dawoudyeh among others. Five centrist lawmakers have formed the Parliamentary Brotherhood bloc. The group has not been approached about the government by yesterday evening but at least one of its members, Tawfiq Kreishan, is expected to be on Sharif Zeid's team. Among the members of the groups are Ali Al Shanti, Nader Thiehrat and Salem Al Zawaidh.

Though representatives of the House's blocs say their consultations with Sharif Zeid were still at their preliminary stages yesterday evening, there are strong signals that the consultations will end up successfully. That, they said, will ensure a smoother executive-legislative relationship than the one that preceded it.

Saudi Arabia's paper parliament seeks a role

Leslie Plommer, recently in Riyadh, surveys the vacant opulence of the country's majlis al shura

TO THE west of Riyadh, amid tracks of stony wasteland, stands the most curious building in all Saudi Arabia. It may be the beginnings of a parliament, and then again, it may be just a mirage.

Its proportions are palatial. There are 270 rooms; some corridors could be gold fairways. There are conference tables, soft armchairs, ceilings festooned with chandeliers, a reference library of virgin books. But there are hardly any people.

Under the huge blue and gold dome of the main debating chamber, most of the 456 chairs are vacant when the 60 MPs sit down for their Sunday sessions.

Underpinning all this is thousands of yards of thick carpets on which the small band of inhabitants of Saudi Arabia's new majlis al shura (consultative council) are treading very, very softly.

The eager young staff guides are pained by the mockery to which their infant assembly so easily lends itself. "Wait a little. Slowly things will change," they urge.

Certainly, after 30 years of broken promises, something is better than nothing. But this is still a paper parliament, set up in 1992 by a royal decree which also allows the monarch to dissolve it. All the members are

his appointees. "We have no one to satisfy but God and the king," says the shura's deputy chairman, Abdullah Naseef.

His is probably the most educated political assembly in the world. More than half the members have PhDs. Dr. Naseef's being in geology from Leeds University. The mix includes businessmen, lawyers, engineers, Islamic sharia law specialists, and senior officials. Regional and clan interests are also represented.

They feed public opinion to the king and his ministers, they propose laws to the cabinet, they examine and advise on government programmes, they invite ministers for questioning. Everything is done, however, with a caution and politeness that betokens total dependence on the king's pleasure.

There are hopes that "in time" perhaps half the shura will be elected. It is not at all clear, though, that a majority of Saudis want it to collide in any serious way with the ruling family headed by King Fahd.

A bigger priority for most is the insertion of some teeth into the bodies that more directly affect their lives — the regional councils established by the same set of royal decrees in 1992. So far, these remain talking shops for the officials who run the provinces anyway. But at the national level many Saudis have something close to a horror of confrontation politics. One need only mention Kuwait's assembly, where ministers are regularly summoned to be raked over the coals, to see the alarm such an example evokes.

"Consensus is very important here," observed a Western diplomat with long experience of the region. "This council will never be anything but a shura in the Islamic (consultative) sense. It will never be an English parliament. That would mean shouting, insults, division!"

Without a civil society independent of the state — the intricate network taken for granted in the West of professional associations, unions, parties, clubs and the media — the arbitration of opinion in Saudi Arabia

rests with the king. This produces a paradox which would-be reforms in the middle class have yet to resolve: The institution of absolute monarchy which impedes political modernisation and itself indulges in the controlled use of religious zealotry is the only institution capable of protecting them from the forces of Islamic regression.

There are many prohibitions, but under King Fahd their daughters are educated, their roofs sport satellite dishes, and their art exhibitions are put beyond the reach of the religious police by government permits.

That is why educated Saudis demanding the overthrow of the monarchy are few and far between. What they are calling for in increasing numbers is more political participation at all levels, and reform of the ruling family.

"The policies of 50 years ago are no longer adequate," said a moderate Islamist.

"We are like two trains. One is going 500 mph. It consists of modern cities, big institutions and state of the art technology. The

other is going maybe 75 mph, in our administrative and religious thinking and political organisation. This sets the climate for conflict."

An academic said: "Education, housing, health care — the regime is not efficient enough to deal with all the issues. We need study centres, think tanks... We need a leadership."

These diagnoses are beyond dispute. Saudi Arabia's society and economy have become too big and complex to govern on the old sheikhdom model, its ever growing corps of intellectuals and technocrats too talented to waste in lives of frustration.

With no mainstream system of political participation, the shura is the only officially sanctioned organ where a moderate progressive programme might be formulated. It is nowhere near being such a forum yet.

"This is a very interesting time," said one establishment reformer, "but there are no reference points — no opinion polls, no real newspapers, no public discussion."

A starting point might be the press box which overlooks the shura chamber. It is empty much of the time: reporters are allowed in for the opening, only to be ejected for debates.

The Guardian

Eyes focused

(Continued from page 1)

Lower House and is now seen as ready to take the job of foreign minister, especially because of his diplomatic skills and close relations with the palace.

Mr. Kabariti is known to have excellent relations with the Syrian leadership as well as some of the key figures in the Saudi ruling family. These are qualities which are shared by Mr. Qassem.

If Mr. Qassem is appointed as foreign minister in the Sharif Zeid cabinet, then Mr. Kabariti might be offered the information portfolio, a post the influential deputy might be reluctant to accept without solid guarantees of independence from undue influences of other ministries.

As far as the economic team is concerned, Bassel Jarrah, who served as minister of finance during some of the crucial years for Jordan's economy in the late 80s and early 90s, is tipped to be brought back to his job by Sharif Zeid.

Mr. Jarrah, a leading banker who is now president of Royal Jordanian, was the

key member of an economic team under Sharif Zeid along with Dr. Ziad Fariz, who now serves as advisor to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, and Abdullah Ensour, now a member of Parliament, who has also served as minister of planning, minister of education (for a short period) and minister of industry and trade.

However, there was no indication on Friday whether Sharif Zeid in fact wanted to replace Planning Minister Hisham Al Kharbi, who has worked with Mr. Jarrah in a former cabinet but as minister of energy and mineral resources.

Rima Khalaf, the first woman member of a Jordanian Cabinet since Inam Mufiti in the early 80s, is too deep into structural reforms in the investment climate in the country in her present capacity as minister of trade and industry. Some sources said Dr. Khalaf was expected to be retained in the job, but Deputy Ali Abu Ragheb, head of the Financial Committee of the Lower House, was reportedly a strong contender for the post.

Mr. Ahol Ragheb's appointment as minister of

trade and industry would leave the possibility open that Dr. Khalaf could be appointed minister at the Prime Ministry for economic affairs or advisor at the Royal Palace.

Mr. Ahol Ragheb has served as minister of supply, minister of trade and industry as well as minister of energy and mineral resources in the past.

Regardless of the possible changes, some of the economic team in the present cabinet of Dr. Majali is expected to be appointed advisors either to King Hussein or Crown Prince Hassan because of the need to maintain the continuity in economic reforms and policies under implementation in the country.

The overriding factor in any possible scenario of appointment in the government would be the nature of agreements that Sharif Zeid might strike with the various parliamentary blocs. If anything, some of the speculation and rumours could prove totally irrelevant if the blocs insist on some of the key portfolios as the price for their endorsement of the Sharif Zeid government.



A Syrian civilian paints a portrait of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, featuring the statement "peace is a noble aim and a precious goal," on a wall of Damascus airport (AFP photo)

Israel and Syria: Peace through strategic parity?

By Israel Shahak

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM holds that the collapse of the USSR has left Syria weaker. The same argument is being applied to other Arab states and to the Palestinians. In my view, the conventional wisdom, so often mistaken about Middle Eastern realities, is totally mistaken in the case of Syria. The main reason for the tentative progress in the present Israel-Syria negotiations and Israel's unusual readiness to make some concessions to Syria is that they are being conducted in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and the consequent increase in Syrian military power.

It is well-known that President Hafez Al Assad proclaimed for years that he would only conduct negotiations with Israel from a position of strength. As interpreted by Ron Ben Yishay in *Yedioth Ahronot* on Sept. 16, this meant achieving strategic parity with Israel. "Assad is already very close to realising his old dream," he says.

And the growth of the Syrian army's power dates from the aftermath of the Gulf crisis. The first contribution was from the U.S., "which allotted some of the best among captured Iraqi tanks and self-propelled guns to Syrian forces as a reward for participation in the anti-Iraq coalition." Having declared Syria a "terrorist" state, the U.S. could not legally disburse any credits to it. But it convinced some unnamed European countries to grant Syria "several hundred million dollars" after the Gulf war. "At the same time Syria received a grant of \$1.5bn directly from the Saudi royal house," I believe such grants continue to flow.

In Ben Yishay's view, with which I concur, the acquisition of these high-quality weapons by Syria and the Saudi funding of these purchases were attributable to their shared fear that "Israel might attempt to impose on Syria a peace on Israel's terms, exactly as Israel had attempted to do during the Lebanese war."

In such an attempt, "the Israeli army, breaking through the Golan Heights ceasefire lines, could reach the outskirts of Damascus in less than 24 hours." In Ben Yishay's view, Israel had this option until a few years ago. "Right now, however, Syrian armour is capable of stopping an Israeli attack simultaneously on two fronts, in the Golan Heights and in Lebanon. Moreover, if the Israeli air force attacks Syria, as it did in October 1973, in order to destroy half of Syria's military and civilian infrastructure, Mr. Assad would be able to retaliate, with no less devastation, which he could not do in 1973.

Where the Syrians get their arms

The Israeli view is that the Syrians have what Israel calls "non-conventional weapons," namely accurate surface-to-surface missiles which can be equipped with chemical warheads. Against these, Israel is virtually defenceless. Therefore, for the first time in Middle Eastern history, a state, in this case Syria, is capable of defending itself effectively against Israeli attack.

No Israeli expert has explained why, as Ben Yishay put it, "during the long years when the USSR and its satellites supported Syria, it could not really advance towards strategic parity with Israel." I would guess that Soviet policies had, at least since the 1962 Cuban crisis, been secretly coordinated with the U.S. Things deteriorated in this respect under Gorbachev

who, according to Ben Yishay, "pretty soon after assuming power told Assad in no uncertain terms that he expected him to make peace with Israel, even if on Israeli terms. To make it clear that he meant business, Gorbachev stopped all Soviet weapons sales to Syria. For some time he allowed the supplies of limited quantities of spare parts, but eventually even these were stopped."

For whatever reason, Gorbachev's policies were consistently pro-Israel. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the new rulers of Russia refused to sell any weapons to Syria except for hard currency, which Syria then hardly possessed. But as a consequence of Saudi funding and tacit U.S. support, Syria has been able to acquire quality weapons for hard cash. According to Israeli commentators, the countries now selling Syria high-quality weapons previously unobtainable from the USSR are primarily Russia, other states of the former USSR and North Korea. There can be no doubt that the Syrian army is now much better equipped than it was when Syria depended on Soviet supplies.

It is the new strategic parity which has led the Israeli establishment to believe in the sincerity of Syria's wish for peace. Professor Moshe Ma'oz, who has access to the Israeli security services, said in *Yedioth* on Sept. 23 that "although Syria keeps arming itself with weapons which can be lethal to us, its claim that the purpose of these armaments is strictly defensive is eminently credible. After all, Syria needs to deter Iraq. And its need to deter Israel is very much greater. It needs to avoid a repeat of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and to conduct negotiations from a position of strength. Right-

ly, Israel is doing exactly the same, buttressing its military and strategic standing so as to simultaneously negotiate from a position of strength."

How reliable will the U.S. be?

Ma'oz adds that Israeli military strength is derived partly from U.S. supplies of modern weaponry deliberately intended "to provide Israel with superiority over all neighbouring Arab states together." But he is aware that U.S. support for Israel is conditional on Israel's willingness to coordinate its policies with the U.S. "Once Israel gives away the Golan Heights to Syria, the U.S., as it has promised, will keep supplying the Israeli army with the most sophisticated modern weaponry in abundance, so that it may retain its strategic superiority over the entire Middle East even in peace time." Yet I doubt whether this is what Mr. Assad wants.

Amir Oren (*Davar*, Sept. 30) agrees with Ben Yishay that until 1991 the Americans, regardless of what they officially declared, didn't want Israel to withdraw from the Golan Heights. It was Syrian participation against Iraq which changed American attitudes. Mr. Oren discussed Israeli relations with Syria against the background of steady reductions in the U.S. defence budget and the decrease of presidential power under Mr. Clinton. While other Israeli commentators assume that Israel may be generously rewarded by the U.S. for any accord with Syria, Mr. Oren believes that when the U.S. defence budgets are being cut, it may be difficult to persuade Congress to grant Israel the huge sums it has come to expect.

Mr. Oren admits that "President Clinton loves Israel effusively and loves

even more American voters who support Israel." But he warns that "Clinton is becoming ever weaker as president, to the point that his wishes are being less and less taken into account." Mr. Oren anticipates that "in 1994-97 no responsible Israeli prime minister and defence minister can rest at ease that Mr. Assad would suffer rebuffs passively; nor expect that the Israeli army would win a quick, easy and cheap victory; nor hope for a war in which Israel could accomplish more than without fighting it."

Mr. Oren uses this argument against the opponents of withdrawal from the Golan who really want a war with Syria, in order to let "the Israeli army take advantage of its deployment on the Golan and win a quick victory. This assumption, however, ignores such factors as the loss of morale of civilians in the rear and of the troops on the front as soon as they realise that the war is unnecessary. And above all else, it ignores the fact that the Israeli army cannot fight a protracted war without having its indispensable supplies renewed."

In conclusion, it can be said that the two most important factors prompting Israel to make an effort to reach accommodation with Syria are the new strategic parity and Syria's Saudi funding with presumed U.S. backing. Israel's military and intelligence leaders, foolish as ever, were not aware of the build-up of Syrian strategic strength until it was too late. Only now is Israel, for the first time, prepared to negotiate a genuine deal with Syria. It is a moot question whether the deal can be concluded, but if it is not, Israeli leaders now know that the result will not be an easy war of the sort they used to be able to wage.

Middle East International

AFM turnover, prices plunged

(Continued from page 12)

equity of the companies listed in the market dropped to JD 3.397 billion from JD 3.463 billion in 1993 (figures of book values were not immediately available).

— Total number of shares in the market rose to 677,674,424 from 529,017,345 in 1993.

— The government issued permission to 32 foreign companies to enter the market with a total capital of JD 195 million, but the actual capital that entered was JD 4.2 million, or 2.2 per cent of the permitted amount. Application by 16 other foreign companies with a capital of JD 90 million are pending with the government.

— Fresh stock entering the primary market totalled JD 446,850,670 in value, up 93.1 per cent from JD 231,061,501 in 1993.

— Daily trading during the year averaged JD 2.02 million in 1994 (245 days of business) compared with JD 3.96 million in 1993 (244 days of business). The decline was 49.1 per cent.

— Total number of shares traded during 1994 was 174,475,801, down 35.1 per cent from the 270,439,340 shares that changed hands during 1993. The decline was 35.1 per cent.

— The daily average of shares traded during 1994 was 716,228, compared with 1,109,358 in 1994. The decline was 35.4 per cent.

— The total number of contracts concluded during the year was 253,654, compared with 335,553 in 1993 (decline 24 per cent).

— The daily average of contracts during 1994 was 1,035, compared with 1,375 in 1993 (decline 24.7 per cent).

— A comparison showed

that selected companies made a pre-tax profit of JD 133.5 million in the first half of 1994, compared with JD 114 million posted by the same companies during the same period in 1993. Final figures for the whole year are not yet available.

— The banking sector made a pre-tax profit of JD 83.5 million in the first half of the year, compared with JD 72 million during the same period in 1993; the industrial sector scored JD 39.3 million, compared with JD 33.7 million in 1993; the services sector posted JD 7.5 million, compared with JD 4.3 million in 1993. The insurance sector registered a lower profit of JD 3.2 million compared with JD 3.9 million in the same period in 1993, a decline of 17.9 per cent.

Dr. Touqan emphasised the need for total honesty on the part of all companies whose shares are listed in the market. He summarised the proposed amendments to the concerned law and internal regulations of the market as under:

— All companies listed in the market should provide all details of developments that might have an impact on their share prices. Such information should be provided as quickly as the developments occur.

— The list of stockholders should be reorganised in a manner that would facilitate easy and uncomplicated transactions.

— The management of the market would have the right to adjust the capital requirements of brokers as and when it finds it fit to do so.

— The capital requirement of brokerage firms which wanted to deal on behalf of others and also operate own

portfolios was raised to JD 500,000 and those who wanted only to deal was raised to JD 250,000 in early 1994. The firms were given two years to meet the requirement and were obliged to meet half of the requirement in the first year.

— The amount of guarantee provided by the brokers to the market was raised to JD 150,000 from JD 100,000.

— Whenever a company holds its regular annual general assembly, its shares will not be allowed to trade during that particular day.

— Six of the companies listed among the 60 firms whose share prices constitute the basis for the general price index were removed from the list because of poor performance, but another six was added to the list.

— The market management heard 24 complaints, mostly related to unauthorised dealings, bounced cheques and investors failing to meet their obligations to the brokers, and took appropriate action. Dr. Touqan did not spell out the nature of the action taken.

— Stocks of eight companies were removed from the trading floor during the year because of accumulated losses that exceeded 75 per cent of their capital. Four others were also removed for other reasons that were not specified in the annual report.

— A team of AFM experts made a study of the situation and the possibility of establishing a Palestinian stock market in the West Bank and Gaza under an agreement made by the Palestine Company for Development and Investment and the study was presented to the company. Details of the study were not released.

Arab economic structure cracks under low oil prices

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Low oil prices have caused cracks in the Arab economic after decades of state domination and a reluctance by governments to acknowledge the private sector's role in development.

Several Arab nations have embarked on sweeping reforms to tackle persistent economic woes and experts expect such programmes to gain momentum because of encouraging results and slackening aid from fellow oil producing countries.

In the oil-rich Gulf, low oil income has jolted Saudi Arabia and its neighbours out of previous lavish spending, forcing them to slash expenditure, remove subsidies and hike services fees.

"The Arab economic structure is undergoing dramatic changes because of the decline in oil prices in the past years and expectations they will not see major improvement in the near future," a Gulf economist said.

"Oil and non-oil countries now realise the only way to offset such a decline is to reshape such a structure, which has been characterised by government control, tight economic policies and lack of incentives," he added.

Arab states have suffered most from the drop in crude prices as oil is the main source of their income.

But for non-oil members, the drop was equally harmful as they depended heavily on aid from Gulf and other Arab oil producers which has plummeted to less than one fifth of its level in the early 1980s, when it averaged around \$5 billion a year.

The drop in oil prices has slashed total Arab oil earnings to around \$90 billion a year from a record \$212 billion in 1981, when crude prices were above \$30 a barrel. In 1986, earnings dipped to \$53 billion as prices collapsed to below \$10.

Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and other Arab League nations have carried out reforms including privatisation, improvement of investment laws, freeing of currency exchange and introduction of incentives for industrial projects with others planning to follow suit.

In the Gulf, home to 60 per cent of the world's oil, Saudi Arabia cut its 1995 spending by nearly six per cent over 1994 and 25 per cent over 1993. It also raised prices of petroleum products and services fees and is planning to privatise key public institutions.

Oman and Bahrain trimmed expenditure while similar cuts are expected in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. They have also announced reform plans involving billions of dollars in self-offs.

"It has become apparent that there is no going back to reforms as they are producing results and are the only way to revive Arab economies. I think reform programmes will gain momentum in the coming years," a Gulf banker said.

According to official figures, the reforms have pushed up the Arab economy since being effectively implemented around five years ago.

The combined gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 5.2 per cent annually in real terms between 1990 and the 1992 compared with 1.9 per cent between 1986 and 1989.

The increase occurred despite negative growth rates in Iraq, Kuwait and other regional oil producers due to the 1991 Gulf war.

The figures showed the budget deficit in non-oil Arab states was cut to \$6.28 billion in 1992 from \$10 billion in 1987. The cut was mainly due to a rise in revenues to \$38.7 billion from \$26.6 billion.

Although their trade balance continued to suffer a gap, the overall balance of payments recorded a surplus of around \$6.44 billion in 1986 compared with \$1.2 billion in 1987.

Saudi budget based on \$14 a barrel, expert says

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has conservatively estimated its oil revenues this year on the basis of a \$14 a barrel weighted average price for exports of about seven million barrels per day, a Saudi expert has said.

"Basically the (1995) budget is calculated on a weighted average of \$14 a barrel," the well-placed expert said.

He said Riyadh would probably earn more than from its oil in 1995 after suffering a sharp drop in income in 1994 when prices fell below a budgeted weighted average of about \$14.50 a barrel.

"Every price rise of \$1 a barrel means an increase in (Saudi) revenue by about \$2.5 billion a year," he added.

According to Renter calculations, the weighted average for Saudi crudes in 1994 was about \$14 a barrel.

The \$14 figure is below estimated given since the budget was announced Sunday.

A diplomat in Riyadh who monitors Saudi oil policy has estimated that the budget was based on a weighted average price for Saudi crude of \$15 a barrel. One Saudi official said earlier he thought it might be based on \$14.50.

The Saudi expert told Reuters from Riyadh that Saudi Arabia has traditionally been "very conservative" in its price estimates "except for last year it was below forecast. Last year was a very bad situation for most of the year."

"We could see better prices this year," he added. Saudi Arabia is the world's

largest exporter and producer with a daily output of about eight million barrels, of which about seven million goes for export.

The expert said the budget announced estimates oil revenues at about \$33 billion. The budget, which carries a deficit of \$4 billion, forecast total revenues of \$36 billion.

Record inflation batters Turkish premier's promises

ANKARA (R) — Three years after Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's conservatives came to power promising to tame Turkey's 65 per cent inflation, price increases surged to record-breaking triple digits.

The Ministry of Statistics has said that the wholesale price index — the indicator the government uses to measure inflation — soared 8.3 per cent last month, hitting 149.6 per cent for 1994.

Year-on-year consumer price inflation was 125.5 per cent, it said. Both figures were the highest on record.

Economists blamed the sharp rises on public sector price hikes in late November and early December. The increases had been delayed ahead of a key by-election that was later cancelled by the constitutional court.

Ms. Ciller, then an economics professor, was the architect of her True Path Party's (DYP) programme to lower inflation to less than 10 per cent within 500 days, from December 1991.

The promises helped carry the DYP to victory in the 1991 elections and landed Ms. Ciller a seat as economy minister. She assumed the party's chair and became prime minister in June 1993 when her predecessor, Suleyman Demirel, was elected president.

Ms. Ciller now says she hopes to bring inflation down to 22.5 per cent at end-1995, but economists' forecasts range between 65 per cent and 100 per cent.

'The risk is for further dollar strength against yen, European currencies'

The following report, covering the period from Dec. 29, 1994 until Jan. 4, 1995, is provided by Naser Nabulsi, private client group, Merrill Lynch — Dubai

Currency outlook

Overview

Fundamental View: The dollar has experienced some volatility in thin markets during the holiday season, having moved up to the JPY/USD 101 and DM/USD 1.56 levels. With U.S. consumer confidence at a 4 1/2 year high and U.S. growth close to 4 per cent, the dollar is gaining increasing support from expectations of further Fed tightening in 1995.

Although we have not changed our 12-month targets of JPY/USD 92 and DM/USD 1.55, it increasingly appears that the risk is for further dollar strength against both the yen and the European currencies for the next 3-to-6 months. Dollar strength and recovery overseas would eventually help prompt rate hikes in Japan and Germany, but U.S. officials look increasingly serious about using dollar strength as a tool for cooling off the economy.

Technical View: The U.S. dollar was generally weak against most of the world's major currencies during the week ended Dec. 30. As a result, the dollar index experienced its largest week-to-week loss since June. For 1994 as a whole, however, the index fell 8.4 per cent, this was the first year-to-year decline since 1990. At this point, the index has still only managed to challenge — but not penetrate — resistance in the 89.00-91.00 area. In addition, sentiment described as being overbought, while short term momentum has been working off an overbought condition. Moreover, the recent break below 89.00 was a good sign that a correction is underway.

Thus, while medium term momentum is still constructive (indicating that higher rally highs are still likely in coming weeks) current weakness is likely a short term event in the context of the still developing uptrend. Although benchmark support remains at 84.91, most of the nearby support exists in the 86.80-87.90 range.

Japanese yen

Fundamental View: The dollar has rallied to the JPY/USD 101 level in thin trading around the New Year's holiday. As we have noted in recent weeks, an increasingly compelling case can be made that the dollar has bottomed against the yen with the Fed having moved decisively towards restrictive monetary policy while Japan's economy remains far below full employment. With at least two more rounds of Fed tightening expected in coming months, the U.S.-Japan short-term interest rate differential should continue to move in favour of the dollar in the near term. While Japan's current account surplus remains a long-term problem for the dollar, the fact that it appears to be shrinking could also help bolster short-term, speculative capital flows out of the yen

and into the dollar.

Thus, for the next three-to-six months, it looks increasingly likely that the dollar will move towards JPY/USD 105 or perhaps a bit higher as interest-rate dynamics outweigh the current account factor in exchange rate calculations. We continue to look for the dollar to trade down to the JPY/USD 92 level on a 12-month view, but now believe that the risk is for further dollar strength for the next 3-to-6 months.

Technical View: The Japanese yen gained 0.6 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Dec. 30 and gained 12.1 per cent during 1994. Sentiment is oversold. This would still allow for an upcoming penetration of 100.80-101.80 Y-U.S.\$ support; such a move would set the stage for further weakness to 105-107. With the above in mind, resistance at 96-97 continues to be an important focal point.

Deutschmark

Fundamental View: The dollar held steady against the Deutschmark trading around DM/USD 1.56. It looks increasingly clear that the dollar has bottomed against the mark now that the market has gained confidence in the Fed's inflation fighting credentials. For most of this year, markets have regarded the Fed as being "behind the curve" on inflation and consequently investors preferred to hold marks rather than dollars. Market participants now seem more inclined to believe that the Fed is serious in its turn toward a more restrictive monetary policy. In addition, interest rate differentials are moving in favour of the dollar. Since August, the spread between the U.S. and German three-month rates has gone from near flat to a 125 basis point spread in favour of the U.S. By June 1995, the market's expecting that this spread will widen to 200 basis points.

An important wild card for the dollar is whether or not the massive amounts of capital outflows from U.S. deposit rates in the U.S. rise, as expected, the dollar should stabilise. If capital outflows actually reverse as Americans try to repatriate their foreign investments, the dollar could conceivably rally further.

We are optimistic about the dollar's prospects against the DM and expect the dollar to trade in the DM/USD 1.55-to-1.60 range over the next 12 months. The Deutschmark should however be strong on the European crosses, with political uncertainties besieging some of the European countries like France and Italy while fiscal burdens weigh down other European countries like Sweden and Denmark.

Technical View: The Deutschmark gained 1.8 per cent against the U.S. dollar last week and is attempting to decisively below post-February 1994 uptrend channel. The mark advanced 12.0 per cent for 1994. Sentiment has moved into oversold territory. Momentum still seems to have the potential to remain under pressure until late January or early February. These points suggest that a potentially important medium term top is in place.

Although the 1.58 DM/U.S.\$ level still has to be moni-

tored as important support, further weakness through 1.595 would lay the groundwork for a move toward 1.64-1.68. Benchmark resistance remains at 1.486, but there is intervening resistance near 1.54.

Against the yen, the D-mark gained 1.3 per cent last week (and was essentially unchanged for the year). Medium term oscillators have been under pressure since mid October, but there are initial signs that momentum is beginning to firm up (even though they are not yet oversold). This potentially important change will have to be monitored closely in coming weeks. Support exists at 59-60, with resistance coming in above 66.50.

Pound sterling

Fundamental View: The pound made some gains against the U.S.\$ and the Deutschmark, rising to USD/GBP 1.56 and DM/GBP 2.43. U.K. fundamentals continue to look good. While underlying inflation — retail price inflation less mortgage interest payments — picked up a little, rising to 2.3 per cent in November following October's low of 2 per cent — the lowest level in 27 years. Inflation still remains in the lower half of the Chancellor's 1-4 per cent target range. Real GDP rose 4.2 per cent in the third quarter following a 4.1 per cent increase for the second quarter and growth for 1994 should average an impressive 3.7 per cent.

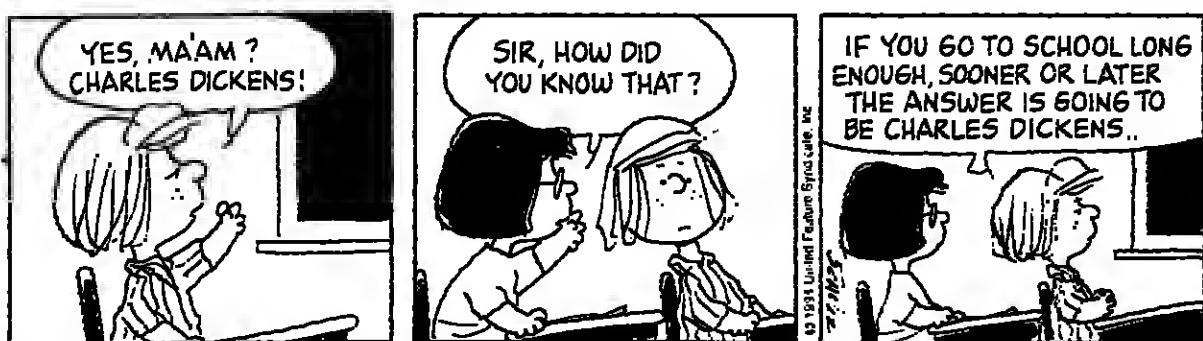
However, with very little spare capacity left in the U.K. economy, inflation is likely to begin picking up soon and our London-based economists expect base rates to be increased by another 50 basis points sometime in the second quarter of 1995. Germany is expected to shift to a less accommodative monetary policy by the middle of next year. However, German officials rate — the Lombard and discount rates — are expected to remain unchanged during the first half of 1995 and that should widen the short-term interest differential between Germany and the U.K.

We therefore look for the pound to appreciate against the mark to DM/GBP 2.50 in 12-month's time and we expect the pound to follow the mark higher against the dollar to our 12-month forecast of USD/GBP 1.61. One risk for the pound, though, is political uncertainty in U.K. Prime Minister John Major's grip on the Conservative majority is rather tenuous and polls indicate that Conservatives would lose a parliamentary election if one were held this year.

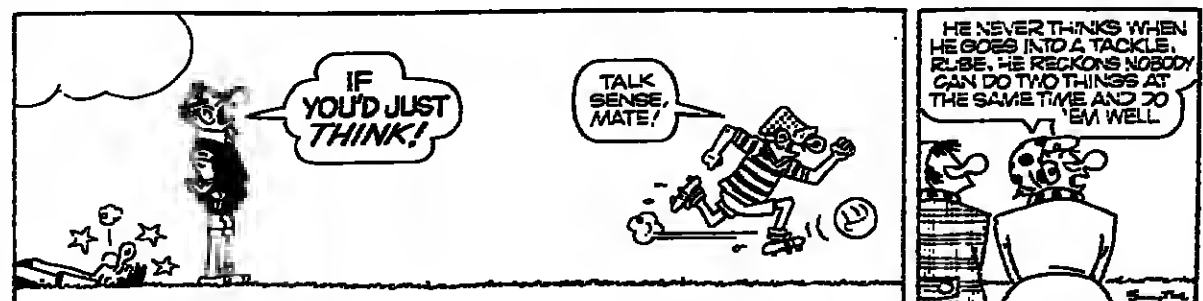
Technical View: The British pound advanced 1.2 per cent versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended Dec. 30. The currency posted a 5.8 per cent net gain for 1994. Sentiment continues to improve and is now oversold. Momentum is weak and has the potential to remain so until February. Important nearby support exists down to 1.526 U.S.\$/L, and a break below that level would allow for a test of the January low at 1.456. Resistance exists near 1.58, then 1.645.

Against the DM, sterling fell 0.6 per cent last week and 5.6 per cent for the year. Momentum has peaked, suggesting that the rally since September is over. Resistance exists at 2.465, and nearby support exists at 2.41.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



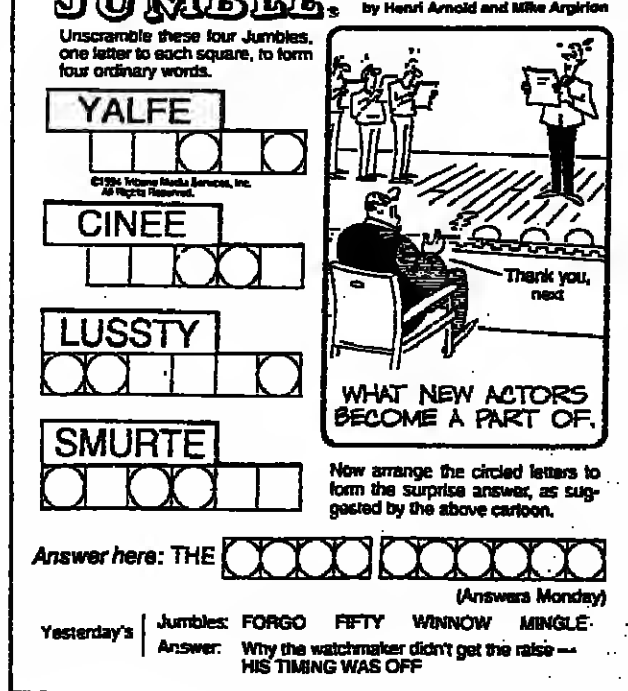
Mutt'n'Jeff



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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 1995
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: With Venus moving into Sagittarius and the Aries Moon rising, together your morning is very well aspected and you should be able to accomplish a lot of the errands you have to complete on your long list.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Talk over plans for the future with your loved ones. Avoid an frantic bigwig. Handle whatever your mate has expected of you for some time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Know what it is your partners want of you and come to a fine understanding. This is a good day to build up the ego of a partner.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Do whatever will gain you greater benefits from your tanks you have agreed to complete. Avoid any temperamental outbursts.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You may be under tense conditions today, so try to get into something pleasant and find relief you need for peace of mind.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you are busy with your loved ones they will not obey so apply the soft pedal and they will cooperate. By the same token, don't permit a higher-up to push you around.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you get together with fellow associates and friends, much can be accomplished of a constructive nature now. Show that you are clever.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Confer with financial experts who can give you right advice about how to add to your present assets and be very successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day to find better ways of advancing in your career and to make new associations. A good day to make arrangements for a trip.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan how to do your regular activities more efficiently so that you can advance more quickly. Don't neglect your weekly marketing.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have a fine plan and getting partners to agree to it will be easy. Visit with close friends and drive carefully on the highway.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Any business affairs you have in mind will work out well if you put your energy into it. Be efficient, you are being watched by some bigwig.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You feel inspired this morning and can gain your aims more quickly than usual. Be romantic with the one you love.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

THE Daily Crossword by Roger Jungman



China in new drugs scandal

BEIJING (AFP) — Two Chinese women weightlifters, who both won titles at last November's world championships, have failed dope tests, a Chinese Olympic Committee (COC) official announced Friday.

Li Dan won the 83kg category and Wang Sheng the 54kg at the championships held in Istanbul. Li set a world record with 107.5 kg in the snatch section, adding two kilos to the mark set by compatriot Li Yajuan.

He Huijian, deputy secretary general of the COC, told AFP by telephone: "I have just been informed by the Chinese Weightlifting Association that Li Dan and Wang Sheng have been tested positive in Turkey and we will punish them according to the current regulations."

"I greatly regret this new affair, which demonstrates the existence of a number of problems," he added. "We must increase doping controls. We introduced a new series of regulations at the start of the year, which must be applied. Our position on fighting drugs is a firm one and we will continue to cooperate in this area with international organisations."

The new doping scandal comes in the wake of 11 Chinese athletes — including seven swimmers — testing positive at the Asian Games in Hiroshima last October.

China's women's weightlifting team completely dominated the Istanbul championships — winning 18 of the 27 gold medals on offer. Second placed Colombia managed only three.

The Chinese athletes busted in Hiroshima all tested positive for dihydrotestosterone (DHT), which masks the presence of the male hormone testosterone.

Chinese officials denied a systematic drug programme in swimming but Yoshio Kuroda, head of the Olympic Council of Asia's medical commission, has said that to use high-tech drugs, swimmers and coaches would have needed formidable research and development back-up.

Mansell pledges to carry on racing

BIRMINGHAM (R) — Nigel Mansell told thousands of his British fans Friday he intended to continue racing in Formula One and had no intention of retiring.

Speaking at the opening ceremony at the Autospot Show, the British driver said he drew strength from his army of supporters and would continue racing as long as he retained their support.

Former world champion Mansell, 41, has been linked with the vacant seat at McLaren since being passed over for the Williams drive earlier this week.

Williams signed fellow Briton David Coulthard, 23, to partner Damon Hill.

Mansell, talking on stage to a massive crowd at the show, said: "You give me strength and they will carry on. While I have your support I will always try to continue racing."

Mansell's only realistic option for a competitive drive is with McLaren where he could partner Finland's Mika Hakkinen. Another Briton, Martin Brundle, was Hakkinen's teammate last season.

Mansell refused to be drawn on suggestions he has already signed for McLaren, who will be powered by Mercedes-Benz engines this year.

McLaren boss Ron Dennis has decided his 1995 drivers but will not reveal at this stage if Mansell is among them.



Nigel Mansell

Olajuwon's 33 points leads Rockets over Mavericks

HOUSTON (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon had 33 points and Vernon Maxwell added 16 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a 108-99 win over the Dallas Mavericks and a sweep of a home-and-home series Thursday.

The Rockets extended their winning streak to six games.

Mario Elie came off the bench to score 15 points and Carl Herrera and Kenny Smith each added 12 points for Houston.

"This was a collective effort," Olajuwon said. "We're winning games we're supposed to win. We've gotten back to basics and complementing each other."

Jim Jackson had 26 points and Roy Tarpley chipped in with 19 points and 13 rebounds for the Mavericks, who have lost six of their last seven games.

In Los Angeles, Loy Vaughn made a key steal and sank a 20-footer with eight seconds left, lifting the Los Angeles Clippers to a 95-93 victory over the slumping Philadelphia 76ers.

With the score tied 91-91, Vaughn stole the ball from Willie Burton and made his shot over Shawn Bradley to give the Clippers the lead.

Philadelphia's Dana Barros, who scored 26 points, lost his dribble to Gary Grant, who made two foul shots with 1.4 seconds for

RESULTS		
Miami	114	Minnesota 91
San Antonio	104	Utah 103
Houston	108	Dallas 99
Milwaukee	111	Golden State 103
LA Clippers	95	Philadelphia 93
Sacramento	94	Detroit 88

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WATER AUTHORITY OF JORDAN EXTENDING THE SUBMISSION AND OPENING DATE

Date: 06/01/1995
Loan No.: KRW/L&G

Further to the announcement published in the local news papers and NFA, the new date set for bid submission and opening for the hereinafter listed bids is not later than 1330 hours, Jordan local time, on Saturday 28 January, 1995 instead of not later than 1330 hours, Jordan local time, on Tuesday 10 January, 1995. Other terms and conditions of the first announcement shall remain as they were.

Contract No.	Material to be Supplied
83/94/WML	1/2" Water Meters
84/94/HSP/L	Horizontal and Submersible Pumps
85/94/HGV/L	Dump Trucks, Flat Beds, Cranes and Water Tankers
86/94/TBP/L	Plumbing Tools, Bearings and Spare Parts
87/94/SM/G	Source Water Meters
88/94/VLV/G	Valves
89/94/SP/G	Submersible Pumps
90/94/4WD/G	Off-Roads 4WD Vehicles
91/94/AWG	Air Compressors and Welding Machines
92/94/WEL/G	Well Control Tools and Equipment

Ag. Kousseil Quteishat
Secretary General
Water Authority

Jilin bids for 2006 Winter Games

BEIJING (R) — After the bitter disappointment of Beijing's failed bid for the 2000 Olympics, China's northeastern Jilin province hopes to win the right to hold the 2006 Winter Olympics, the people's daily said Friday.

Changchun, capital of Jilin, is likely to apply to hold the 2006 Winter Olympics, the newspaper quoted vice provincial governor Sang Fengwen as saying.

The decision on whether to apply formally to hold China's first Olympic competition would depend on the successful staging of China's domestic Winter Games in 1996 and the upgrading of Winter sports facilities, Sang said.

In 1993 China was sorely disappointed when Sydney won the bid to hold the 2000 Summer Olympics. Despite a huge nationwide campaign, Beijing lost the Olympic committee decision by only two votes.

Tomba keeps on winning

KRANJSKA GORA, Slovenia (AFP) — Triple Olympic skiing champion Alberto Tomba of Italy picked up where he left off in 1994-winning.

The 28-year-old, having his best ever World Cup season, easily won the first giant slalom of 1995 here Friday in 2mins. 12.01 secs.

Mitja Kunc of Slovenia and Harald Strand-Nilsen of Norway tied for second, nearly a second behind.

Tomba's victory was his sixth of the season and the 39th of his explosive career.

Giorgio d'Urbano, Tomba's trainer, said he has never seen the Italian in better shape.

"Alberto has only one opponent — Tomba. The only person who can beat him is himself," said d'Urbano.

Tomba's win has put him ever further ahead in the overall World Cup standings. He leads his nearest rival, Switzerland's Michael Von Gruentgen, by over 300 points.

But the Italian refuses to talk about taking the title.

"It is still far too soon. Perhaps we can talk about it in February," said Tomba.

"I'm just delighted that I have been able to show the same form I showed last year," he added.

Germany set for 2nd win in Hopman Cup

PERTH (AFP) — Germany are on target to become the first nation to engrave their name on the Hopman Cup twice after waiting to victory over France in the second semi-final of the indoor tennis tournament Friday.

World number three Boris Becker and Anke Huber, ranked 12th, overpowered France's Jean-Philippe Fleurian and Julie Halard to set up an engrossing showdown Saturday with Ukraine, the big surprise of the mixed teams' competition.

Becker rallied after a slow start to outclass a gallant Fleurian 7-6 (7-0), 7-6 (7-1) in an absorbing men's singles clash at Burswood Dome.

Huber had already proved far too hot for Halard, whom she overwhelmed 6-2, 6-1.

Germany won the fifth Hopman Cup two years ago when Michael Stich and Steffi Graf beat Spain's Emilio and Arantxa Sanchez in the final.

They also reached the final last year before Bernd Karbacher and Huber were conquered by the Czech Republic's Petr Korda and Jana Novotna.

In Saturday's final of the 760,000-dollar (\$585,000) event, they will confront Andrei Medvedev and his sister, Natalia Medvedeva.

The Ukraine pair, seeded number five, have already knocked out the Czech Republic, who were the top seeds.

But Becker and Huber will certainly present their biggest challenge.

Becker said he had great respect for Medvedev and would have to play well to beat the 20-year-old ranked number 15.

"I will also have to improve my service," said Becker, who double-faulted nine times against Fleurian.

Becker said one of the characteristics of top players was that they could have lapses on that scale and still win matches.

"I expect it to be a fair bit tougher in the final than it was today," he said.

The 20-year-old Huber destroyed Halard with clinical efficiency, winning 6-2, 6-1 in an hour.

Halard, 24, had no answer to the German's precision game.

The French player was unable to strike any rhythm with her service, which she dropped three times in each set.

Huber echoed the feelings of the full house of more than 8,000 when she said: "I thought it would be tougher. I believe it was because I didn't give her a chance to attack me. I am sure it will be very tough in the final."

In the men's singles, Fleurian began in dynamic style, breaking Becker's service in the opening game, holding service in the second and leading 4-0 in the third.

However, in champion fashion, Becker rallied to take the third game, broke back in the 10th and clinch the set in the tie-breaker.

Fleurian fought valiantly in the second set, but Becker always had his measure.

In the tie-breaker, Becker was in withering touch.

Woodforde end Kafelnikov's run

In Adelaide, home town hero Mark Woodforde brought off one of the best wins of his career when he dethroned defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the quarterfinals of the Australian Hardcourt tennis championship here Friday.

The 29-year-old South Australian left-hander set up a Saturday semi-final with former world No. 1 Jim Courier of the United States.

Big-serving Dutchman Richard Krajicek, the fourth seed, will take on Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch in the other semi.

Woodforde mastered the windy conditions and hung on after a series of service breaks late in the second set to win 6-3, 7-5 against the brilliant young Russian, ranked No. 11 in the world.

Woodforde won the Adelaide title in 1988 and 1989 and used all his experience to end Kafelnikov's hopes of defending his title.

"This probably ranks as one of the best wins in my career," he said. "He's a class player and I'm just happy I did it in Adelaide."

Kafelnikov said he did not enjoy playing left-handers.

"The conditions really hurt my game but I have to give a lot of credit to Mark — today I learnt a very good lesson," said Kafelnikov.

Courier romped through his quarter-final against Sweden's Thomas Enqvist in just over an hour winning 6-2, 6-4.

The third seed has a poor record against fellow red-head Woodforde, losing three times from their four meetings, the most recent a straight sets loss at last year's Paris Indoor.

"Obviously I'd like to get a bit of revenge I suppose but last year's, last year and it's this year now," Courier said.

Hopes for an all-Australian final ended when fifth seed Patrick Rafter lost 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to Krajicek.

Krajicek will have to beat Boetsch to reach the final. Boetsch had a straight sets win over a giantkilling German Hendrik Dreckmann, 6-3, 6-4.

Boetsch, who spent a short time in the top 20 last year, but is now ranked 53, said he was happy with his form but fearful of playing Krajicek, who has been one of the form players of the tournament.

"It's tough because he puts pressure on your serve because he can fire three or four aces at you," Boetsch said.

Dreckmann reached the last eight after wins over second seed Wayne Ferreira and compatriot Carl-Uwe Steeb.



Anke Huber

Johnson leads Olympiakos to win over Barcelona

ATHENS (R) — Former NBA star Eddie Johnson scored 27 points to lead Olympiakos to a 99-78 victory over Barcelona in a European Champion Clubs' Cup basketball semifinal match.

The Greek side started slowly and trailed for most of the first half as Johnson scored only seven points. But the host side forged ahead 43-37 by the break and after the internal Johnson netted several three-point jumpers as forwards Dragan Tarlac and Alexander Volkov dominated the boards to take a combined 30 rebounds and score 24 points.

Ferran Martinez scored 22 for Barcelona but lost steam in the last 15 minutes, leaving the Spaniards with little offensive power. American Darryl Middleton contributed 11 points and Jose Antonio Montero 10.

Olympiakos, who lost last year's crown to champions Badalona by a single basket, now top Group B and are one of the favourites to reach April's final four in Spain.

In Pesaro:

Group A
Pesaro (Italy) 82 Paok Salonika (Greece) 70 (41-27)
Leading scorers:
Pesaro — Antonello Riva 22, Federico Pieri 16, Walter Magnifico 13
PAOK Salonika — Zoran Savic 21, Kinis 17, Achilleas Mamatzolas 12

In Athens:
Group B
Olympiakos (Greece) 99 Barcelona (Spain) 78 (half-time 43-37)
Leading scorers:
Olympiakos — Eddie Johnson 27, Franko Nakić 15, Alexander Volkov 14
Barcelona — Ferran Martinez 22, Darryl Middleton 11, Jose Antonio Montero 10.

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Settler killed in W. Bank as Palestinian protests spread

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Agencies) — Palestinian assailants ambushed a car near a Jewish settlement in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Friday killing a woman settler and wounding a man, the Israeli army said.

Two girls in the car were unhurt in the attack at Halami's settlement, 12 kilometres northwest of Ramallah.

Bloodstains could be seen inside and outside the car. Israeli troops appeared nervous and were closely checking cars at a hastily set-up roadblock. Army and emergency first-aid forces were called and soldiers scoured the area for attackers.

Jewish settlers scuffled with a Worldwide Television News (WTN) camera crew, breaking their camera. A WTN producer vehemently denied settlers' statements that the crew had interfered with emergency medical treatment of the victims.

Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) correspondent Maher Shalabi said settlers stole a television camera worth some \$40,000 that had been set on the ground while soldiers checked his crew before allowing it to approach the scene.

The shooting capped a week of violence that has further strained the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace deal,

already tainted by bloodshed and delays in implementing Palestinian elections and Israeli troop redeployment.

Israeli forces have shot dead seven Palestinians in the West Bank this week in three separate incidents in which the army said its forces were fired on first by guerrillas.

In the Gaza Strip, in the bloodiest such encounter since self-rule, Israeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinian policemen in unclear circumstances. Israel says its forces were fired on first. Palestinians deny it.

A telephone hot-line has been set up between the Israeli army and the Palestinian police to avoid further bloodshed between the two forces, a military spokesman said.

The direct line links the Israeli army command post at the Erez crossing point into the Strip from Israel with a Palestinian position about a kilometre further South.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Palestinians took part in three separate rallies Friday on the West Bank as protests over Israel's settlement programme spread across the territory.

Near Tulkarm to the north-west of the West Bank, armed Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers stopped several hundred villagers and supporters from breaking into land allotted to a settlement.

At Al Khader, south of

Bethlehem, where the crisis over settlements erupted last week, Palestinians organised a march after Friday prayers.

The army intervened to stop them breaking into the building site of new homes at the neighbouring Ephrat settlement.

And at Al Bireh, north of Jerusalem, 200 Palestinians protested against Israel's seizure of 170 hectares of land to build a road linking the settlements of Pasot to Ofra close to Ramallah.

A young Palestinian led a march to the hill where work started three days before, shouting slogans against settlements through a megaphone.

Several settlers squared up against the demonstrators to prevent them spilling into the building site where work had stopped to observe the Jewish weekly day of rest.

Al Bireh mayor Abdul Jawad Saleh said: "We will stay loyal to our land because it is a fight for life. This injustice has to end."

"We are going to lie down in front of the bulldozers and fight until the last drop of our blood," said 70-year-old demonstrator Ahmad Darwish.

Eight-year-old Fatima who came with her grandfather said: "I came to demonstrate against the Jews who are taking our lands and are killing us. If they don't give back our lands, we are going to kill them."



Palestinian youths clash with an Israeli military police unit on Friday after the noon prayer as they were prevented from holding a demonstration in the village of Al Khader against the widening of the settlement of Ephrat (AFP photo)

Rabin faces public crisis of confidence amid swing to right

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was Friday shaken by a mid-term crisis of confidence in his Labour government as polls showed a sharp swing to the right-wing opposition hostile to the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Rabin, who brought the Labour Party to victory for the first time in 15 years in 1992, was Friday faced with the possibility of a heavy defeat in the 1996 general elections.

A series of opinion polls showed Labour and Mr. Rabin's popularity at an all-time low since the 1992 elections.

"It's time to end the anarchy reigning in our party if we don't want to lose the elections. We are going to have to take some difficult steps," he told the radio, reacting to the polls which showed Labour would suffer heavy losses at the hands of the opposition.

On Sunday the Israeli premier called a meeting of a parliamentary group to study ways of overcoming the crisis which could result in a cabinet reshuffle.

"Rabin is the depressed leader of a depressed people, which have a tendency to get the blues and who will remember Labour with nostalgia when the right has returned to power," the daily Yediot Aharanot said.

Paradoxically although support for Labour and Rabin has been falling steadily,

its policies in the occupied territories still have the support of a majority of Israelis.

"The disenchantment is caused by an accumulation of factors. The peace process is stagnant, terrorist attacks continue, the government functions badly and inflation is at more than 14 per cent," Tourism Minister Uzi Baram told AFP.

A former secretary-general of the party, Mr. Baram said it was "a mid-term crisis" which could be overcome in the next 18 months before the next elections.

"These polls are more an indication of the electorate's disappointment, than of political support for the right-wing whose return to power would spell a total blockage of the peace process," Mr. Baram added.

Mr. Rabin has already had to do some heavy political bargaining to win support for his 44-seat government in the 120-seat Knesset or parliament.

But a poll by the Dahaf institute showed that if elections were held today, Labour would lose 20 per cent of its seats to its main rival Likud.

The right wing, which is opposed to the slightest Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the autonomy deals painstakingly hammered out between Mr. Rabin's government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), would hold the next majority, the poll

published in the daily Davar said.

Mr. Rabin's popularity has also fallen in the polls. On Friday he trailed his rival Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu by two points as estimates showed he would only win 23 per cent of the vote, according to a poll in the daily Maariv.

Just two months ago he was put seven points ahead of Mr. Netanyahu at 29 per cent of the vote.

In the November 1994 elections voters will directly elect their prime minister for the first time. Previously he has been appointed by parliament.

In an even worse poll, to appear in the U.S. magazine Times and reportedly commissioned by Mr. Rabin, Labour would lose 40 per cent of their seats falling to just 27 seats.

Likud would boost its parliamentary share from its current 32 seats to 47, the poll said.

However, another poll showed that Israelis are divided over the burning issue of Israel's settlement programme.

Only slim majority of 51 per cent declared themselves in favour of a total halt to settlement construction or a reining in of the programme.

And 41 per cent agreed with Mr. Rabin's decision to move work at the Ephrat settlement on the occupied West Bank from one site to another. Only 16 per cent thought he should have ordered a stop to all work.

Moscow to pursue Chechen war

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia's security council flew in the face of world condemnation Friday by opting to see the war against Chechen independence fighters through to the bitter end.

It said in a communique that "armed resistance" in the Caucasus republic would have to be "eliminated."

It left a chink of light by ordering Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to begin talks, on "one set condition": that Chechnya remain part of the Russian Federation.

The secretary of the council, Oleg Lobov, announced the decision after a meeting of Russia's supreme security body, which has masterminded Russia's attempt to overturn Chechnya's secession by military force.

The meeting followed escalating world pressure on the Russian authorities to cease their indiscriminate attacks on Chechen civilians and try to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict.

As Russian policymakers stuck with the military solu-

tion, Russian aircraft fired rockets at the presidential palace of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev in central Grozny.

It was the second bombing attack on the palace since President Boris Yeltsin earlier this week ordered that air bombing on the capital should be stopped as of midnight last Wednesday.

And Russian forces kept up a heavy artillery barrage on the Chechen capital in apparent preparation for an assault by ground troops.

Mr. Yeltsin, chairman of the council, appointed Mr. Chernomyrdin to organise negotiations with the Chechens, who have been fighting a Russian invasion of the mainly-Muslim republic since December 11.

Mr. Dudayev, formerly a general in the Soviet air force, has indicated several times that he was ready for unconditional negotiations, but only with Yeltsin or Chernomyrdin.

Until now, negotiations have been left mainly to the

hawkish counter-espionage chief Sergei Stepashin and Vice-Prime Minister for Nationalities Nikolai Yegorov, and have failed to get off the ground.

Mr. Stepashin threatened Thursday to "eliminate" the Chechen resistance. "There will not be a long-term partition of the war," Mr. Stepashin told the Interfax news agency, adding that "those who do not attempt to resist will be eliminated."

The prime minister, on the other hand, has kept a low profile since the start of the Chechen crisis. Moderates here believe he is the only one among the Russian leadership with the clout to negotiate a way out.

At least 256 Russian troops from the armed forces and the Interior Ministry have been killed since Moscow sent in soldiers and armour to Chechnya almost a month ago, Interfax news agency said.

A member of the general staff told the agency that by six p.m. (1500 GMT) on Fri-

day 116 soldiers from the land forces — including 63 officers — had died. The death toll included only those who had been identified.

Lieutenant-General Yevgeny Podkolzin, commander of airborne forces, earlier told Interfax that 100 of his men had been killed in the Chechnya operation and 200 wounded.

President Yeltsin told Russian human rights commissioner Sergei Kovalev that it was "too early" for a ceasefire in Chechnya, the commissioner told a press conference.

Mr. Kovalev said that in a special meeting with Mr. Yeltsin on Friday he had asked the president to halt the fighting, if only for the upcoming Russian Orthodox Christmas.

"The president replied: 'No. It is too early for this,'" Mr. Kovalev said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton expressed concern to Mr. Yeltsin at the high number of civilian casualties in the breakaway region.

Germany to keep Algeria embassy open

BONN (Agencies) — Germany will keep its embassy in Algeria open despite an apparent threat by guerrillas to kill foreigners unless Western missions in Algiers were closed by Saturday, the foreign ministry said on Friday.

A ministry spokesman also said government security experts from European Union (EU) states, the United States and Canada were to meet later on Friday in Paris to discuss ways to enhance safety for their diplomats in Algeria.

Foreign Minister (Klaus) Kinkel decided today that the German embassy in Algiers will continue its work for the time being, a spokesman Martin Erdmann told reporters.

The announcement made Germany the first Western state to react publicly to the threat issued in a letter last week that told Western embassies in Algiers to close by Jan. 7 or see more foreigners killed.

In Algiers, suspected militants Friday shot dead a reporter for the country's largest French-language daily and seriously wounded a radio journalist in their continuing campaign to silence Algeria's media.

Zine Eddine Aliou Salah of the French-language daily Liberte was killed in an attack thought to have been carried out by Islamic radicals near his house in the Khazrouma neighbourhood of Algiers, his newspaper said.

Radio reporter Ali Abdou was shot in the head in a separate attack in the southern suburbs of the Algerian capital, Algerian radio said.

Abdoud was taken to military hospital at Ain Naadja, colleagues at the radio station said, and was in a serious condition.

Salah, 35, a married father of two, was a well-known investigative journalist here whose latest stories covered

the hijacking of an Air France jetliner in Algeria and its storming in France.

The Islamic Salvation Army vowed to put him to death "even in Mecca" in a recent issue of its weekly newspaper, Al Fath Al Mouline.

Algeria's interior minister said on Friday security forces were gaining in the war against Islamic guerrillas and would crush them this year.

Abdul Rahman Meziane Cherif also told Reuters in Tunis the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) would not be allowed to run in presidential elections expected in the next 12 months.

The FIS was poised to win an election when the army-backed authorities stepped in and cancelled it January 1992. Algeria was plunged into violence in which at least 10,000 guerrillas, civilians and members of the security forces have been killed, according to government figures.

Foreign sources put the toll as high as 30,000 and say the country is in a state of civil war.

Mr. Meziane Cherif said the guerrillas of the Armed Islamic Group and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) benefited at first from slackness and lack of preparation by the military.

Now "they are running away from our security forces which have adapted themselves to the new situation," he said.

In Rome, an influential Catholic peace group said on Friday that leaders of Algeria's opposition, including the FIS, had arrived in Rome for talks on the country's crisis.

The Saint-Egidio Community, which hosted Algerian opposition leaders for meetings in November, said in a statement that new talks were needed after an increase in violence, including the hijacking of the French airliner and the killings of four Roman Catholic priests.

France warms to Iraq, opens Baghdad toehold

PARIS (Agencies) — France officially received a senior Iraqi leader on Friday for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war and announced it would re-establish a diplomatic toehold in Baghdad, drawing immediate criticism from Britain.

Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said after a lengthy breakfast with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz that Paris would open an interest section at the Romanian embassy in Iraq very soon.

In Baghdad, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Friday paid glowing tribute to his troops who fought against the U.S.-led coalition in the 1991 Gulf war and spoke of world peace.

President Saddam called on the world's major powers, in a speech to mark the 74th anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi army, to deal with other countries with "respect."

"Thereupon, dialogue will replace threat and the use of force, and cooperation will take over from menace" to help nations "reach understanding," he said.

"In this way peace will prevail in the world on the level of regions."

His speech, broadcast on radio and television, paid tri-

bute to those who fought to free Iraq from colonialism.

And he hailed those who had taken part in the "glorious" fights such as "the mother of all battles" against the U.S.-led coalition which drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in the January-February 1991 Gulf war.

The army was "the people's staunch shield... preparing itself to face any evil," the Iraqi president said.

He warned that all the technological might and superiority in the world would not win when "the people are determined to fight and all the food they have does not exceed that of a simple fighter."

Despite the Gulf war, the U.S.-led coalition had "failed to subdue the will of Iraq," President Saddam said.

Mr. Juppe said his 80-minute meeting with President Saddam's longtime right-hand man covered the situation in Iraq and Baghdad's implementation of U.N. resolutions arising from its ill-fated 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"Some progress has been made over the past months, more remains to be done," Mr. Juppe, who previously met Mr. Aziz in New York four months ago, told repor-

ters.

In London, a British Foreign Office spokesman faulted France, which has just taken over the presidency of the European Union (EU), for failing to coordinate with its EU partners.

"No other member state has re-established in Baghdad in this way," he said. "We remain very suspicious of the Iraqi regime's intentions in the wake of the events last October. It is not the moment to relax pressure on Iraq to comply fully with U.N. requirements."

France was one of Iraq's major arms suppliers and trading partners during the 1980s and is still owed an estimated several billion dollars by Baghdad.

It advocates a gradual easing of the U.N. oil embargo to reward Iraq for recognising Kuwait's borders and complying with disarmament resolutions.

Mr. Juppe was cagey about prospects of a move to ease sanctions when the Security Council reviews the issue later this month.

He endorsed Mr. Aziz's call for a "legalistic implementation" of the resolutions and said France wanted to break the deadlock.

AFM turnover, prices plunged in 1994, but market situation healthier—Touqan

BY P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A massive infusion of fresh stocks was largely behind the sharp decline in turnover and prices at the Jordanian stock exchange during 1994, but despite the decline, the year was healthy and led to organisational streamlining of dealings and market practices, according to the head of the bourse.

Announcing the year-end figures and assessing the performance of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) at a press conference on Thursday, Omayya Touqan, the AFM director-general, also said that amendments to the law governing the market were already drawn up and would be presented to the authorities soon.

These amendments, he said, should lead to a better organisational structure of the market and improve the climate for foreign investment in the country.

The annual report of the AFM released by Dr. Touqan at the press conference showed that turnover during 1994 dropped to JD 495.1 million from 968.6 million in 1993 — a decline of 48.9 per cent.

The general share price index closed on Dec. 31, 1994 at 143.6 points, down 14.9 points, or nine per cent, from the year's opening of 158.5 points.

The separate sector indices posted declines of 3.9 per cent in the commercial banks sector, 13.5 per cent in the insurance sector, 16.9 per cent in the industrial sector and 8.9 per cent in the services sector.

One of the main factors behind the drop in turnover and prices, Dr. Touqan said, was the increased activity in the primary market which handles fresh issues before the stocks enter the secondary market.

Dr. Touqan said 26 new companies were established during the year with a capital of JD 305.59 million. In addition, 24 existing companies raised JD 139 million in capital from the market, leading to a total of 100 million being taken away from the main trading floor of the market for varying periods during the year.

The movement of capital was coupled with a hike in interest rates and a ceiling imposed on credit facilities

and the sum total of these developments led to declined capital in the secondary market and hence the drop in turnover, said Dr. Touqan.

When fresh stock of an existing company enters the market, prices are also adjusted to accommodate them and this led to the decline in prices as indicated by the general index, he said.

"The year 1994 was an exceptional year," Dr. Touqan told the Jordan Times in separate comments. "But I believe that the figures are quite healthy despite the decline."

Brokers said the uncertainty over the Middle East peace process, the roller-coaster course of the autonomy accord signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the ambiguity that surrounded the economic cooperation accord signed by Jordan and the PLO were also part of the reasons behind the decline.

The peace treaty signed by Jordan and Israel in October was too far into the year to make any dramatic changes in the market situation, the brokers said. However, the impact of the peace treaty is expected to reflect on the

market this year, they said.

According to Dr. Touqan, the market assumed a higher stability during 1994 and internal measures adopted by the management also led to a better organisational structure of market practices and dealings.

Following are some of the highlights of the annual report of the AFM:

— The industrial sector accounted for JD 209.18 million, or 42.3 per cent, of the annual turnover, followed by commercial banks with JD 184.79 million, or 37.7 per cent, the services sector with JD 91.24 million, or 18.4 per cent, and insurance stock with JD 7.84 million, or 1.6 per cent.

— The sector indices closed at 157.8 points in the commercial banks sector (down 6.4 points, or 3.9 per cent), the insurance sector at 138.2 points (down 21.6 points or 13.5 per cent), in the industrial sector at 128.1 points, (down 26.1 points, or 16.9 per cent) and in the services sector at 131.4 points, (down 12.3 points, or 8.5 per cent).

— Total market value

COLUMN

Marilyn Monroe to appear on U.S. stamps

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Silver screen legend Marilyn Monroe will grace the U.S. Postal System's new stamp series commemorating Hollywood superstars. The final design will be unveiled Thursday at the Planet Hollywood Restaurant in New York, with Anna Strasberg, the director of the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, and Postmaster General Marvin Runyan officiating. The stamp features the star's signature as well as an image of Monroe that the post office says captures "the explosive combination of talent and vulnerable beauty that continues to enrapture America and the world." Monroe, who is alleged to have had relationships with President John Kennedy and his brother Robert, committed suicide in 1962.

It may not be just another naked lady statue

NEW YORK (R) — In the kind of discovery that makes art world gossip, a leading expert has identified a small bronze figure of Cleopatra that goes on sale here next week as probably a long-lost work of the great Florentine sculptor Benvenuto Cellini. Sotheby's auction house announced the discovery Thursday saying that the expert, Dr. Peter Moller of the University of California at Santa Barbara, would be reexamining the work and comparing it with existing records in the hopes of making a final determination. The 10-1/4-inch long (27.3-cm) statue of a nude reclining Cleopatra holding an asp to her neck is going on sale next Wednesday with the catalogue attributing it to an unknown French sculptor of the mid-16th century from the School of Fontainebleau. Cellini, a 16th-century artist, worked in France. If the attribution is changed to Cellini, whose known surviving sculptures number fewer than 15, the sculpture's selling price could be 10 times or more above its current estimate of between \$25,000 and \$35,000, Sotheby's said. According to Elizabeth Wilson, the head of Sotheby's Department of Renaissance Sculpture, Dr. Moller saw the work when it was on display in California and recalled that an inventory of Cellini's works compiled after his death included both a wax model of Cleopatra and a bronze model. She said the work was close in style to other known Cellini works.

Frenchmen do it more than most

NEW YORK (R) — Frenchmen do it most, Poles do it alone more than most, Americans like it done orally and Hungarians enjoy doing it in public. That's what Playboy's international sex survey found in 6,000 replies to questionnaires it sent out to readers in 11 countries, the magazine said Wednesday. "The French begin to look like advertisements for the erotic power of Evian water and Camembert," an article on the results of the survey said. "More than a third of the Frenchmen in the survey said they have sex four to five times a week, and a fifth of them do it daily." The magazine said that in the survey to be published in its February 1995 edition, readers were asked 62 questions about how and what they do during sex, where and with whom they do it and whether AIDS has changed their behaviour. Responses from women varied so widely from country to country. The magazine did not publish them for comparison. Among some of the revelations of the survey were that 17 per cent of men in the Netherlands say they never receive oral sex, 48 per cent of men in the Czech Republic have had extramarital affairs and 27 per cent of Taiwanese expect sex on the first date. Playboy said most men are worried about sexually transmitted diseases — 90 per cent in Brazil, 81 per cent in France, 78 per cent in Greece, 75 per cent in the United States and 70 per cent in Japan. But Poles, almost 60 per cent of whom had been with only one partner in the previous year, are least concerned about contracting a sexually transmitted disease.